

RESTORATION QUARTERLY

STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN SCHOLARSHIP

Vol. 3, No. 3
3rd Quarter, 1959

Published by *Restoration Quarterly*

Issued Quarterly

EDITOR

J. W. Roberts, Abilene Christian College
Box 173, Station ACC; Abilene, Texas

EDITORIAL BOARD

Batsell Barrett Baxter, David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee
William M. Green, University of California, Berkeley 4, California
Reuel Lemmons, Editor *Firm Foundation*, Box 77, Austin, Texas
Joe Sanders, David Lipscomb College, Nashville, Tennessee
J. D. Thomas, Abilene Christian College, Abilene, Texas
Jack P. Lewis, Harding College, School of Bible and Religion, Memphis, Tennessee

BUSINESS MANAGER: Pat Harrell, P. O. Box 431
Villanova, Pa.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY: Abe Malherbe, Box 144,
Lexington, Massachusetts

Contributions are invited. Manuscripts and communications for the *Quarterly* should be addressed to the editor. MSS should be typewritten, double-spaced, and proof-read before submitted. Notes and appropriate references may either be at the end of the articles or at the bottom of pages. Hebrew and Greek words should be transliterated. A biographical sketch should accompany each new contributor's work. No manuscripts will be returned, except when accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Books for review should be sent to *Restoration Quarterly*, P. O. Box 45, Natick, Massachusetts.

Subscriptions and business correspondence should be sent to the Business Manager, P. O. Box 431, Villanova, Pa.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Regular
One Year \$4.00

Students
One Year \$3.00

Single Copies \$1.25

CONTENTS

Introduction	98
Gnosis and Primitive Christianity: A Survey (1)—Abraham J. Malherbe	99
The Function of Theology—Don H. McGaughey	108
The Doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin in the Second Century—Harold O. Forshey	119
The Case For John 7:53-8:11—Roy Bowen Ward	130
Reflections on Reading Easton's Commentary on the Epistle of James in the <i>Interpreter's Bible</i> —J. W. Roberts	140

BOOK REVIEW

Kenneth S. Wuest: <i>Philippians</i> through Revelation, Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament, Vol. III. Hester J. Gruber	144
--	-----

Introduction

The present issue of the *Restoration Quarterly* is being sent out from a new address. The change is due to our business manager's moving to Villanova, Pa., to become head of the Bible Department at Northeastern Institute for Christian Education. NICE is to be congratulated for having secured the services of Dr. Harrell. Everrett Ferguson, who has contributed several articles to this journal, also has joined with other dedicated men in the beginning of this new school.

The offering in this number includes the first part of a background article on Gnosticism and the Early Church. The second part of the article will appear in Vol. 4, No. 1. This article is by Abe Malherbe, who has made special study in the field of Gnosticism. Much new information is forthcoming in this area and this article is timely.

Don H. McGaughey and Harold O. Forshey are both ex-students of Abilene Christian College and have been doing graduate work in Harvard University. McGaughey's article attempts to illustrate that the different theological schools of thought may be summarized by a study of the presuppositions of the men who laid the foundations for such schools. The doctrine of original sin is an old battleground, but the battle is still going on. Forshey's article helps to set the rise of this doctrine out of the background of the early church in proper perspective. It is significant that the idea was not current in the second century.

The other major article is a response to a recent article on the text of the story of the woman taken in adultery. Roy B. Ward's article goes further than the article of Earle McMillan to attempt to explain the origin of the section.

Hester J. Gruber, who reviews the book of Wuest, has the A.B. and M.A. degrees from Indiana University and the Ph.D. from Bryn Mawr College with a major in Latin and minor in Greek and ancient history. She was Instructor in Classics, U. of Missouri, 1942-44, Head of Latin Department, Walnut Hill School, 1944 to present and Dean from 1955 to present of same school.

SECRETARY OF RESTORATION QUARTERLY HONORED WITH A SCHOLARSHIP BY ABILENE CHRISTIAN

We are very happy to announce that Abraham J. Malherbe, the executive secretary of the *Restoration Quarterly*, has recently been honored with a post graduate scholarship by Abilene Christian College for outstanding service by one of its graduates to the *Restoration Quarterly*. The award was made possible through the generosity of a friend of both the college and the *Quarterly*. Abe was selected as the recipient by a committee at the college. The award is for \$1000 and will be used during the next calendar year by the recipient to further his research in his special field of the study of Gnosticism.

Gnosis and Primitive Christianity: A Survey (1)

Abraham J. Malherbe

The phenomenon known as "Gnosticism" has enjoyed the attention of more researchers into the background and development of primitive Christianity than almost any other subject. Perhaps, when one notices the many prefabricated molds into which the material for the study has been made to fit, it will be more correct to say that Gnosticism has been at the mercy of a great host of investigators whose main contributions have not always been objectivity or lucidity. Gnosticism is such an important factor in the study of the New Testament and of the early church, that the serious student cannot afford not to come to grips with it. It is the purpose of this study to survey the field rapidly and to introduce the reader to the literature, problems, and theories pertaining to the study. A survey of this type can be of value only if it is made in the light of recent discussion. The main feature of this study will therefore be the continual references to contemporary discussions of Gnosticism. References to the older works will only be made if they stand as mileposts in the history of the investigation.

Definition

A claim to be able to define Gnosticism and to give an account of its origin would be highly presumptuous at this stage of scholarly investigation. The terms "Gnosticism" and "Gnosis" are used in this paper to denote those Christian sects or individuals who were so violently opposed by the early church. This use of *gnosis* and *gnostikos* is a modern one and is not derived from the early church as denoting the large, ill-defined movement that we have in mind when we use them.¹ The term "Gnostic" is derived from the emphasis placed by these ancients themselves on *gnosis*, "knowledge."

The cardinal characteristic of Gnostic thought is its dualistic view of the universe and the divine power. The deity is supramundane and is in no way responsible for the universe, which came into existence through emanations from the divine being. The human soul, or according to the Gnostics, man's true, inner self, is part of the divine being, but, having been overpowered by demonic beings, now finds itself captured in the cosmos, over which the demons have dominion. The heavenly being sends his Son down to the cosmos to redeem those who really belong to him. By virtue of their true,

¹See R. P. Casey, "The Study of Gnosticism," *Journal of Theological Studies* 36 (1935), pp. 45-60 for a discussion of *gnosis* and *gnostikos*.

spiritual nature, they recognize the Son and are illuminated, receiving knowledge, *gnosis*. This knowledge is revelatory, and thus of a religious nature, and not the rational cognition of philosophy. The reception of *gnosis* by the *pneumatikos*, the spiritual man makes him again a partaker of the divine nature. The redeeming Son now again ascends to the Father and in his ascent brings to nought the power of the demonic forces who try to restrain him.²

This basic outline posed certain problems for Christianity. One of these problems involved the question of Christology. If all matter is evil, as the Gnostics said, how does one reconcile this with the incarnation, that is, with the assumption of the material body by the Son? This problem was overcome either by Adoptionism or Docetism, that is, either by the statement that the divine Son was not really united with the human body, but that the Father only "adopted" the human Jesus and thus ascribed the value of sonship to him, or, that the Son only appeared or seemed (*dokein*, "to seem") to have a human body.

Another problem involved Christian ethics. If matter is evil and thus of no positive value, what effect does it have on one's moral conduct? Again, there were two possible views, quite different from each other, namely license and asceticism. Since not the body but only the spirit of the *pneumatikos* is important, one could be morally free and indulge all one's desires, since these acts could not possibly affect one's true self. On the other hand, since the body is so inferior, one could say that it was to be denied and was to be brought under subjection to the higher, spiritual entity.

It should be emphasized that this sketch, although basic to most of the Gnostic systems, does not represent everything called "Gnostic." Almost any one system will differ in some aspect from what has been said. The only way to obtain any familiarity with Gnosticism is to read Gnostic material. When this is done, it will be observed that one has to come in contact with the phenomenon in order to understand it, or at least, to know what it is. In this it is like existentialism, with which, according to some modern existentialists, it has much in common.³ Of primary Gnostic material, the

²For a sympathetic (!) description of what is basic to Gnosticism, see R. Bultmann, *Primitive Christianity in Its Contemporary Setting*, New York, 1956, p. 162ff.; Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston, 1958, p. 31ff.

³Thus especially Hans Jonas, *Gnosis und spaetantiker Geist*, 2 vols.: I, Goettingen, 1933, 1954; II, Goettingen, 1954; and Heinrich Schlier, "Das Denken der fruehchristlichen Gnosis," in *Neutestamentlichen Studien fuer Rudolf Bultmann*, hgg. von W. Eltester, Berlin, 1954.

most accessible to readers of this journal are the "Hymn of the Pearl" in the *Acts of Thomas*,⁴ and selections from the *Hermetica*.⁵

Sources, Methodology, and Origin

Determining the origin of Gnosticism is as hazardous as defining it. We are primarily concerned with the adaptation of Christians to the above Gnostic base. However, the situations in which early Christians found themselves, and to which the apologists addressed themselves, will be immeasurably illuminated if it can be determined whether Gnosticism was of Greek or Oriental origin, or of both, and whether it was pre- or post-Christian in origin.⁶

The nature of the sources of early Gnosticism has been the chief obstacle in arriving at any consensus on these matters. The main sources have been secondary ones, namely the polemical writings of the Church Fathers against the Gnostics. Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Origen, and Epiphanius quote from some Gnostic writings and summarize some of the systems. When it is remembered that these writers were vehemently battling the views they preserved for us, it will be understood that great care should be exercised in forming opinions of the Gnostics from them. After all, one is not too likely to emphasize those elements in an opponent which are orthodox, or point out those characteristics worthy of emulation! Nevertheless, the skepticism of many writers regarding the veracity and the value of the Church Fathers as sources for early Gnosticism, is not justi-

⁴Most accessible in English, in M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament*, Oxford, 1955, and in Greek, in Max Bonnet, *Acta Thomae*, Leipzig, 1883. Although the *Acts of Thomas*, except for this hymn, has been retouched by orthodox hands, it still represents a form of Gnosticism less gross than most other extant Gnostic writings.

⁵A good selection in English from the *Poimandres* is found in C. K. Barrett, *The New Testament Background: Selected Documents*, New York, 1957, p. 80ff. The standard text to be used is that of A. D. Nock and A. J. Festugiere, *Hermes Trismegiste, Corpus Hermeticum*, 4 vols., Paris, 1945.

⁶An excellent survey of the study of Gnosticism, with a recent bibliography, is to be found in M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte des griechische Religion* II, Munich, 1950, p. 586ff. The most recent books in English are: Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion*, Boston, 1958, and R. McL. Wilson, *The Gnostic Problem*, London, 1958. The latter although focusing attention on a small area, is probably the best introduction to the latest relevant literature.

fied. Some investigation into the reliability of these sources has been made with positive results.⁷

The best material, however, is still original Gnostic material. Some such material is embedded in some Fathers. These blocks of material have been subjected to close scrutiny and are still, despite the recent discoveries (see below), the best material for the non-expert to work with. Thus, in Clement of Alexandria, a sophisticated kindred spirit, there is a collection of excerpts from Theodotus, a member of the Valentinian school.⁸ Epiphanius, in *Panarion* 33:3-7, contains a letter of Ptolemaeus, a "bud of the Valentinian school" (Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* I, 1, 1-8,4), to Flora.⁹ In his commentary on the Gospel of John, Origen contains forty-eight fragments from the commentary on John by Heracleon, another disciple of Valentinus.¹⁰ Finally, there is the newly discovered cache of Gnostic writings, for the most part Valentinian. These will be discussed in greater detail

⁷For a general view of the sources, and for a suggestion of the different layers of material in them, see A. Harnack, *Geschichte der altchristliche Literatur bis Eusebius*. Although Harnack's work has been superseded in many respects, contemporary scholars would do well to note his suggestions, especially on the sources for Valentinus. For Irenaeus, see A. Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums*, p. 52. For Hippolytus, see G. Salmon, the cross references in the *Philosophumena*, in *Hermathena* 5 (1885), pp. 389-402; H. Staehelin, *Die gnostische Quellen Hippolyts in seiner Hauptschrift gegen die Haeretiker (Texte und Untersuchungen 6, 3)*, Leipzig, 1890; and S. Schneider, *St. Hippolyt on the Greek Mysteries*, *Rospr. Akademji* 56 (1917), pp. 329-377.

The sources have especially been worked over in order to determine the system of Valentinus. Cf. W. Foerster, *Von Valentin zu Herakleon*, Giessen, 1928; and C. Barth, *Die Interpretation des Neuen Testaments in der valentinianischen Gnosis (Texte und Untersuchungen 37)*, *passim*. The most helpful introduction to this aspect of the study is by G. Quispel, "The Original Doctrine of Valentine," *Vigiliae Christianae* 1 (1947), pp. 43-73.

⁸A beautiful example of the kind of work that is needed in the study of Gnosticism is that of R. P. Casey, *The Excerpta ex Theodoto of Clement of Alexandria (Studies and Documents)*, London, 1934.

⁹A. Harnack, *Der Brief des Ptolemaeus an die Flora: eine religiöse Kritik am Pentateuch im 2. Jahrhundert*, 1902, pp. 507-545; G. Quispel, "La Lettre de Ptolemee a Flora," *Vigiliae Christianae* 2 (1948), pp. 17-54, and his edition of the text, *Lettre a Flora*, Paris, 1949.

¹⁰W. Foerster, *op. cit.*, has discussed these fragments in their context in Origen, and has placed them in position in the development of second century Valentinianism.

in the survey. Of this material there have been published *The Gospel of Truth*,¹¹ *The Gospel of Thomas*,¹² *The Gospel of Philip*,¹³ and *The Apocryphon Johannis*.¹⁴ These are really the only definitely second century primary Gnostic material at our disposal.¹⁵

In working with this material, which is difficult to handle and which represents a religious entity difficult to understand from the outside and almost two millennia removed, it is not surprising that different approaches have been made, and different results have been obtained.

The first great proponent of the Oriental origin of Gnosticism was W. Bousset, the real father of the *religionsgeschichtliche* method for the study of ancient religion.¹⁶ The Oriental view is largely dependent on this method, and consequently those who hold to it, mostly German scholars,¹⁷ stand or fall with it. The *religionsgeschichtliche* method, or the "history of religions" method, as it may be clumsily translated, approaches the study of a particular religion by studying it in its setting within surrounding religions and with the phenomenon of religion as the guiding principle.¹⁸ Locale, source, and tem-

¹¹M. Malinine, H.-C. Puech, G. Quispel, edd., *Evangelium Veritatis*, Zurich, 1956. (Fortunately for the impecunious student, future publication of these discoveries will be in two editions: The de luxe edition like this one, which contains a reproduction of the Coptic text, with translations in French, German and English, with elaborate notes in French, and an inexpensive edition on the order of the Bude texts.) The pages missing from this edition, having become available only after its appearance, appear in German translation by H.-M. Schenke in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 83(1958), cols. 597-500.

¹²A German translation by Johannes Leipoldt appears in the *Theologisches Literaturzeitung* 83(1958), cols. 481-496.

¹³A German translation by H.-M. Schenke appears in the *Theologisches Literaturzeitung* 84(1959), cols. 1-26.

¹⁴The text appears in W. Till, *Die gnostische Schriften des koptischen Papyrus Berolinensis* 8502 (*Texte und Untersuchungen* 60), Berlin, 1955. The importance of the *Apocryphon Johannis* appears from the fact that it is found in three different recensions in the Nag Hammadi library.

¹⁵C. H. Dodd thinks that the first tractate of the *Corpus Hermeticum* is earlier than Valentinus, and thus not later than A.D. 125-130. Cf. *The Bible and the Greeks*, London, 1935, Pt. II, and *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, p. 12, notes 1 and 2. This cannot be regarded as having been definitely established, however.

¹⁶First developed in his *Hauptprobleme der Gnosis*, Goettingen, 1907. Bousset applied the method, developed in this ground-breaking work, to the study of Paul in *Kyrios Christos*, Goettingen, 1913, p. 222f. His views are accessible in English in his article on "Gnosis," in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edition.

¹⁷These national classifications are very broad and loose. Harnack and Leisegang, for instance, would not fit into this grouping.

¹⁸Sir James Frazer's monumental, *The Golden Bough*, is the classic example of this method.

poral relationships are not assigned much value. The main emphasis is placed on the phenomenological elements. Certain motifs are traced, and interpretation takes place upon them as a basis. By using this method, Bousset found that Gnosticism was a mystic religion with an Oriental, dualistic basis. He thought that a type of Syrian Gnosis was at the bottom of it all.

W. Anz arrived at basically the same view, except that for him a Babylonian background was more probable. He saw the emphasis as being not so much on dualism *per se*, as on the ascension of the soul through the heavenly constellations which are ruled by evil spirits.¹⁹

The best known modern theologian who depends on this approach is Rudolf Bultmann. Present-day German New Testament scholarship is heavily indebted to him for its general view and many of its presuppositions. Bultmann's methodology is faulty, and in the light of this it is surprising that he has exerted so much influence. Somewhat like Bousset, he joins all the elements of different Gnostic systems together and constructs a pan-Gnostic system, which certainly did not exist. Especially important for him is the Mandaean literature. This body of literature dates from about A.D. 700, however, so "for any history of the Mandaeans and their beliefs before 700 we are dependent solely on inference and speculation."²⁰ Bultmann thinks that the traditions on which the Mandaean literature is based can be traced to the beginning of the Christian era, however, and it is upon this ground that he posits the theory that John's Gospel is a Christian revision of the Mandaean myth. A recent statement by Alan Richardson is very much to the point here.

It will be noted that when scholars like Bultmann describe a Gnostic doctrine they take their first-century 'evidence' from the New Testament itself. But this is a question-begging proceeding, since the New Testament is susceptible of a very different interpretation; if there is no real evidence for a developed 'Gnosticism' in the first century outside the New Testament, then the New Testament can hardly be used as evidence for its existence.²¹

It has been seen then that the *religionsgeschichtliche* method is embarrassed by the paucity and the late date of the sources. It is historically inaccurate in its phenomenological approach, and it is therefore fluid enough for one to be able to find whatever he is looking for, wherever he wants to find it, whenever he wants to find

¹⁹*Ursprung des Gnostizismus (Texte und Untersuchungen 15)*, 1897.

²⁰C. H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1953, p. 115.

²¹Alan Richardson, *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament*, London, 1958, p. 41f.

it. Proponents of this method usually read the late evidence back into the New Testament, and then they conclude the Gnosticism existed earlier than Christianity and that it materially affected it as early as the writing of the New Testament.

Proponents of the view of Oriental origin build their study mainly on the myth of the redeemer, who overcomes the problem posed by dualism. The mythological element thus predominates. Those who hold to a Greek origin, on the other hand, see the rationalistic aspect of Gnosticism reflected in Greek philosophical thought. For them dualism is the basis on which the study is to be conducted. Harvey, in the introduction to his edition of Irenaeus,²² discusses the Greek background and reveals clearly the emphasis placed on dualism.

Harnack described Gnosticism as the "acute Hellenising of Christianity."²³ According to him, the Gnostics were essentially Christian philosophers. He sees the allegorization and spiritualizing of the Old Testament as due to the influence of Greek philosophy. The hidden meanings thus obtained gave readers of the Old Testament a strange interest which was carried over into Christianity. This preoccupation with that which is hidden developed under Greek influence into Gnosticism. Harnack regarded the Oriental characteristics that he could discern in Gnosticism as representing a lower type of Gnosticism.

Hans Leisegang,²⁴ like Paul Wendland,²⁵ think that Greek philosophy played an important part in the formation of the Gnostic systems. They regard the Oriental motifs as the constituent parts of a mosaic, with Greek philosophy being the cement that holds it together.

De Faye²⁶ belongs to this general view rather than to the pronounced Oriental school. He is more conscious of the need to develop a sound methodology and has tried to work one out. De Faye does not think that one can speak of "Gnosticism" proper until about A. D. 120. From a close study of the second and third century sources, he concludes that there are three stages of development of Gnosticism, corresponding roughly to the first half of the second century, the second half of the second century, and the third century. In the

²²W. W. Harvey, *Sancti Irenaei ep. Lugdunensis libros quinque adversus haereses*, Cambridge, 1875. Cf. also C. Baeumker, *Das Problem der Materie in der griechischen Philosophie*, 1890; S. Petrement, *Le dualisme chez Platon, les gnostiques et les manicheens*, 1947; W. Theiler, *Die Vorbereitung des Neuplatonismus*, 1930.

²³A. Harnack, *The History of Dogma*, 1896-1900, I, p. 227.

²⁴Hans Leisegang, *Die Gnosis*, Leipzig, 1924, p. 3ff.

²⁵Paul Wendland, *Hellenistische-roemische Kultur*, Tuebingen, 1912, p. 163ff.

²⁶E. de Faye, *Gnostiques et Gnosticisme*, 2nd edition, Paris, 1925.

first period the Gnostics applied a philosophic exegetic method, while in the last there is an overwhelming sacramental outlook. This development in Gnosticism would parallel that in Neoplatonism. While de Faye's work is encouraging, the details of his conclusion will not stand up in the light of the Nag Hammadi discoveries.

Finally, with regard to the Greek background, attention should be drawn to the work of Torhoudt.²⁷ Perhaps because of the fact that this stimulating work is written in Dutch, it has not received much scholarly attention. Torhoudt isolated a Gnostic system in Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride*, which represents to him in rough outline the system of Valentinus. He suggests a common source for Plutarch and Valentinus. Plutarch does mention Plato's dualism in his discussion of the mysteries. Harvey²⁸ has pointed to Valentinus' possible dependence upon the Greek philosophers. If Torhoudt's thesis is valid and is developed, the whole question of the relationship between Gnosticism and the mysteries would be opened up.²⁹

A third theory of the origin of Gnosticism which is constantly gaining in popularity, is one which relates to the rise of Judaism and Christianity.³⁰ Just as the New Testament has been viewed through glasses tinted with preoccupation with eschatology in the last fifty years, so now Gnosticism is related to apocalypticism.

Burkitt³¹ thinks that Gnosticism was an expression of ordinary Christianity in terms and categories which suited the science and philosophy of the day. He tells that if we can make our way through the unfamiliar imagery to the ideas that they attempt to express, some of these forms will appear really thoughtful to us and will show kinship with some modern philosophical and psychological conceptions. To him Gnosticism was a Christian product, an attempt to fill the void left by the failure of apocalypticism and the eschatological hope. Robert Grant has taken up the task from Burkitt.³²

²⁷Albert Torhoudt, *Een Onbekend Gnostisch Systeem in Plutarchus' De Iside et Osiride*, (*Studia Hellenistica*), 1942. Cf. also L. Cerfaux, "Un theme de mythologie gnostique dans le *De Iside et Osiride* de Plutarque," *Chronique d' Egypte* 11(1936).

²⁸*Op. cit.*

²⁹See R. Reitzenstein, *Die Hellenistische Mysterienreligionen*, 3rd edition, Leipzig, 1927; and Bruce M. Metzger, "Considerations of Methodology in the Study of the Mystery Religions and Early Christianity," *Harvard Theological Review* 48(1955), pp. 1-20.

³⁰See especially H.-J. Schoeps, *Urgemeinde-Judenchristentum-Gnosis*, Tuebingen, 1956, and R. McL. Wilson, *The Gnostic Problem*, London, 1958.

³¹F. C. Burkitt, *Church and Gnosis*, Cambridge, 1932.

³²These views, presented in lectures delivered at Harvard Divinity School on November 5th and 6th, 1957, are to be elaborated in a book *Gnosticism*, to be published late in 1959.

Probably the most important new direction is that which looks to heterodox Judaism. Quispel³³ and his Utrecht colleague, van Unnick, are the main advocates of this view. They think that certain motifs existed in heterodox Judaism out of which Gnosticism developed, after these motifs were brought over to Christianity. Their evidence at this point is still somewhat tenuous. They do, however, realize the need for remaining with the sources.

In summary, then, it has been seen that the nature and scarcity of the sources prevent absolute certainty on these introductory matters. Nevertheless, it does seem likely that Gnosticism blossomed forth in the early generations of Christianity, nurtured in a Judaeo-Christian milieu and obtaining its sustenance from an atmosphere heavy with the motifs of dualism and redemption.

Lexington, Massachusetts

³³G. Quispel, "Het Johannesevangelie en de Gnosis," *Nederlandsche Theologische Tijdschrift* 11(1957), pp. 173-203.

The Function of Theology

Don H. McGaughey

The diverse present day theologies that are being advocated are diverse largely because they proceed from different presuppositions regarding the nature and function of theology. The problem of programatic or task of theology becomes an extremely vital problem if one is interested at all in promoting unity among those claiming to follow Jesus. An attempt therefore to uncover the presuppositional thinking as regarding programatic of some of the more prominent contemporary theologies will be helpful.

To make a rough categorization, the more prominent existent theologies may be classified in four groups: 1) Conservative Protestantism, 2) Neo-orthodox Protestantism, 3) Liberal Protestantism, and 4) Roman Catholicism. Since we are speaking specifically of the problem of programatic or function of theology as a presupposition, (i.e., we are not speaking of the many theological ramifications that develop within these systems), we may say that the programatic for each group can be traced to the theological thinking of one or two men. For example the programatic thinking of Conservative Protestantism rests largely upon the concepts of John Calvin; that of Neo-orthodoxy rests largely upon Karl Barth; Liberal Protestantism on Friedrich Schleiermacher, and Roman Catholicism on Augustine and Thomas Aquinas.

Therefore our task is considerably lessened by simply ascertaining the presuppositional thinking of these men as regarding the function of theology. Having ascertained their presuppositional thinking, we shall then attempt to draw some evaluational conclusions.

Augustine:

Augustine possessed a mind that longed for religious truth. Having been brought up in the Catholic Church, he early "departed the faith" and became enamored with Manichaeism. But he was unable to find satisfaction here and consequently lapsed into a period of skepticism. Under the influence of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, Augustine once again found Christianity, and thereafter he became one of the most renowned expositors of the Catholic faith.

Having accepted the Catholic tradition, it became Augustine's unaltering conviction that the authority which he so needed in his search for religious truth was to be found ultimately in the Catholic Church. He indeed accepted without hesitation the Christian Scrip-

tures, but their authority really rested on the attestation of the church. Apart from this attestation, they had no true validity.¹

Although Augustine fully granted the authority of the church, he was still willing to admit that bishops and councils (ecumenical as well as provincial) could err.² Thus the authority of the church did not necessarily imply infallibility in every official pronouncement. The absolute organ for infallibility, however, was left undefined by Augustine.

For Augustine, the task of theology was essentially a proclamation and interpretation of the sacred Scriptures in the milieu of the church's doctrinal tradition.³

While it is quite true that Augustine was influenced by Neoplatonism (as is especially seen in his concept of God), it does not appear that his theology is a conscious attempt to combine this philosophical system with the teachings of the church. Nor does Augustine seem to be primarily concerned with offering an apology for Christianity to the unbelieving world. He holds that unless one first has faith he is not really capable of understanding:⁴ "*nisi credideritis, non intelligetis*" ("unless you believe, you will not understand,") is his watchword. He states: "Rightly has it been ordained by the majesty of Catholic discipline that they who approach religion be first of all persuaded to have faith."⁵ Further: "True religion cannot be rightly entered upon unless we submit to authority and believe those things which afterward, if we live well and worthily, we shall attain to and understand."⁶ And finally: "If you are not able to know, believe that you may know. Faith precedes; the intellect follows."⁷

¹*Contra epistulam quam vocant fundamenti*, 5. The complete Latin text of Augustine's works is available in Migne, *Patrologia Latina*. The best critical text, (as much as is completed) is in *Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum*, Vienna, 1866 to present. References in this article follow the English translation *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*. (Ed. Philip Schaff). Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1956.

²*De Baptismo*, II.3 (4).

³*De Catechizandis Rudibus* XXVI, 50.

⁴Enchiridion 5. Cf. also on this point *A Companion to the Study of St. Augustine*. Ed. Roy Battenhouse. New York: Oxford University Press, 1955, p. 22. This publication is a very helpful guide in understanding the thought of Augustine.

⁵*De Utilitate Credendi* 29.

⁶*Ibid.*, 21.

⁷*Sermo* 188.1.

Thus for Augustine, theology is "faith speaking to faith"; upon these principles he expounds what he believes to be the Christian message.

Thomas Aquinas:

The Age of Aquinas came under the influence of a different philosophical school from that of Augustine. As noted, Augustine lived under the influence of Neo-platonism, and western theology had continued largely under this influence up to the day of Aquinas. But the age of Aquinas was marked by a more dominant influence of Aristotle than the preceding age. Due to the work of Islamic scholars much more of Aristotle's writings became available to Christian thinkers.

In the *Summa Theologica* it seems that the problem or the task upon which Thomas sets out to work is the problem of introducing the Aristotelian philosophy of his day into the Roman Catholic traditional theology without corrupting the essence of the theology.⁸ For Thomas theology is a science of revelation. It has its source in the Word of God—the Scriptures.⁹ Its basis is faith in the truth of this word.¹⁰ But the question is how to bring both reason and revelation together without sacrificing the essential truth in either of them, or rather, more positively, to the greater benefit of both.¹¹

One of the most significant differences between Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy is in the realm of epistemology. Platonism holds that man apart from individual things can know God and the spiritual world. Augustine, for example, writes: "The senses of the soul are as it were the eyes of the mind." And again: "I, Reason, am the same in the mind as the act of looking is in the eyes."¹² On the other hand, Aristotelianism holds that all human knowledge is the result of sensible experience. Thomas clearly accepts this teaching. He states: "... our knowledge, even of things which transcend the senses, originate from the senses."¹³ Thomas, however, it should be pointed out, does not slavishly follow Aristotle in every point. As already noted, his main intent seems to be to bring about a reconciliation, or combining of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology, and especially in the *Contra Gentiles*, to use the latter

⁸Cf. and extensive treatment of this problem by Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas, Intro.* New York: Random House, 1956, p. 10.

⁹*Summa Theologica*, I.1:1ff. (English Dominican Fathers, trs.) New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹Gilson, *loc. cit.*

¹²*Soliloquia* I.6 (12).

¹³*Summa Contra Gentiles*, I.12. (English Dominican Fathers, trs.) London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, Ltd., 1924.

as an apology for the former. In an attempt to do this, Aquinas combines Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy by distinguishing between 1) natural and revealed theology, and 2) the conditions of knowledge in this life and in the next.¹⁴

Natural theology, or philosophy, according to Aquinas is all of the knowledge that is available to man discovered through Aristotelian principles—that is, through the senses. Revealed theology is that knowledge which is beyond the power of human reasoning, and is contained within the Christian Scriptures. However, revealed theology may also contain many things that are available through the senses, because all people are not able to exercise their reasoning faculties unto the attainment of these truths.

In the second distinction, Aquinas maintains that it was impossible to see God in this life. However, he goes beyond Aristotle in holding to a future life in which God can be seen apart from our corporeal bodies. He appeals to the Scriptures and maintains that those who deny that man can see God “contradict the authority of the Holy Scripture” and are “to be rejected as false and heretical.”¹⁵

From the foregoing it is seen that the theologies of Aquinas and Augustine rest on the same basis. Both agree that ultimately man's reason is insufficient, and that he must accept God's revelation before he can ever really know God. Both accept the Catholic Church as the authority, i.e., both accept the Scriptures as interpreted by the church as an infallible witness. Both feel that their primary task is to set forth the doctrinal tradition of the Catholic Church. The particular philosophical situation in which each man found himself, and to which each was attempting to communicate his thought, to a large degree accounts for differences that appear in their theologies: Augustine was primarily concerned with exposition, Aquinas with correlation. Essentially, however, their theologies rested on the same basis.

John Calvin:

Calvin's entire theological system is largely structured upon his concept of God. His views of the Sacraments, Atonement, The Church, etc., are all shaped or colored by it. A right knowledge of God (and man, since God is manifested in His creation of man) is true wisdom. “True and substantial wisdom principally consists of two parts, the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of ourselves.”¹⁶

¹⁴A. C. McGiffert. *A History of Christian Thought*. Vol. II. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954, p. 260.

¹⁵*Summa Contra Gentiles*, op. cit., III.54.

¹⁶*Institutes*, I.1.1. The complete text of Calvin's writings are available in *Corpus Reformatorum*, beginning with Vol. XXIX.

There is no question in Calvin's mind as to where or how one might obtain this true wisdom. In the first place, he is certain that it cannot be through mere human reason. Human reasoning is blind and can never in and of itself rise to a perfect knowledge of God.¹⁷ It is true, however, that human reasoning might know a few things. In fact the philosophers of great repute stumbled onto a few truths. But all their knowledge amounted to only a smattering.¹⁸

Calvin believes that the human mind, by natural instinct, possesses some sense of the knowledge of God.¹⁹ However, he feels that this intuitive knowledge has been extinguished or corrupted partly by ignorance, partly by wickedness.²⁰ Calvin also asserts that the knowledge of God is manifested in the phenomenal world and in His continual government of the world.²¹ But man is blind to these manifestations because of his pride and iniquity and can be made receptive to them only through divine impartation of faith.²²

Man, thus, is incapable, out of his own self, to rise to a pure and perfect knowledge of God; the sacred Scriptures therefore become the necessary guide and teacher to lead man into this true knowledge of God.²³

From this it is seen that Calvin follows the path of both Augustine and Aquinas in finding in the Scriptures an authoritative voice of God. But he does not, as these two, base the authority of the Scriptures upon the authority of the church.²⁴ For Calvin, the ultimate witness to the authority of the Scriptures comes from the internal testimony of the Spirit.²⁵

In the light of the foregoing, it is concluded that, for Calvin, the function of theology amounts essentially to a formulating and an exposition of the teachings of the Scriptures. In the preface to his *Institutes*, Calvin specifically states that he has written this work "to prepare and qualify students of theology for the reading of the divine word."²⁶

¹⁷*Institutes* II.2.18.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*, I.3.1.

²⁰*Ibid.*, I.4.1.

²¹*Ibid.*, I.5.14.

²²*Ibid.*

²³*Ibid.*, I.6.1.

²⁴*Ibid.*, I.7.2.

²⁵*Ibid.*, I.7.4, 5.

²⁶*Preface* to the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*.

Friedrich Schleiermacher:

Because of the work of this nineteenth century theologian the approach to, and the presentation of, theology was substantially altered. According to Schleiermacher, the essence of religion is "feeling." He arrives at this conclusion by differentiating between "knowing," "doing," and "feeling." "The Piety which forms the basis for all ecclesiastical communions is, considered purely in itself, neither a knowing, nor a doing, but a modification of feeling. . . ." ²⁷ This "feeling," he more specifically defines as "absolute dependence." ²⁸

Schleiermacher's conception of religion as essentially feeling is based upon his analysis of self-consciousness. He perceives in self-consciousness, two elements—"a self-caused-element," and a "non-self-caused-element." ²⁹ He maintains that from the second of these elements arises a "feeling of absolute dependence." Schleiermacher designates that toward which this feeling is directed, the "whence" of this feeling. The "whence," he states, man has called "God."

This "feeling of absolute dependence" upon the "whence," of God, (being a part of the human self-consciousness), Schleiermacher designates "the religious self-consciousness." This "religious self-consciousness" tends toward fellowship. As this fellowship assumes certain definite limits, a church is formed. ³⁰

Having thus defined a church, Schleiermacher is able to proceed with his discussion of the task of theology. This definition, Schleiermacher feels is a necessary prerequisite to his discussion, because theology pertains only to the Christian church, and it can only be understood in the light of the proper conception of the Christian church. ³¹

Schleiermacher defines the Christian religion as a "monotheistic faith, belonging to the theological type of religion . . ." It is essentially distinguished from other similar monotheistic religions by the fact that in it every thing is related to the redemption accomplished by Jesus of Nazareth. ³² But, it should be noted that by redemption, Schleiermacher only means that in Jesus the "God-consciousness in man came to full expression." ³³

²⁷*The Christian Faith*, p. 5. This work first appeared under the title *Christlicher Glaube nach Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhang dargestellt*. The references in this article follow the English edition by H. R. Mackintosh, Edinburgh: T and T Clark, 1956.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 12

²⁹*Ein Sichselbstsetzen und ein Sichselbstnichtsogesezt haben*. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 26.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 476.

³³*Ibid.*, pp. 476, 478.

On the basis of such presuppositions Schleiermacher maintains that the function of theology is to set forth descriptively and didactically the religious affections of the Christian church.³⁴ As such it has a two-fold value—an “ecclesiastical” and a “scientific.” The “ecclesiastical” value is seen in the reference to Christ as redeemer. The “scientific” value is seen in the definiteness of the concepts expressed and in their relation to each other.³⁵

Schleiermacher's analysis of the religious self-consciousness as a feeling of absolute dependence makes religion essentially a product of the human feeling. This being the case, Schleiermacher looks upon all theological pronouncements of the church as merely expressions of human feeling given in a specific situation and as such carrying no authority whatsoever. He states: “Dogmatic Theology is the science which systematizes the doctrines prevalent in a Christian church at a given time.”³⁶ With one sweep, Schleiermacher brushes aside all doctrine as nonessential, since it is only subjective statements arising from the inward feelings of various men.

Karl Barth:

For Karl Barth there is a vast qualitative difference (as opposed to a mere quantitative difference in certain expressions of contemporary theology) between God and man. “Man is man and God is God.” As a result of this vast qualitative difference, there is considerable difficulty in attempting to bring the Infinite into the sphere of finite conception. The only way, Barth maintains, that this can be accomplished is by the adoption of the method of dialectical dualism.

Furthermore, if it is true that there is a vast qualitative difference between God and man, then man can never rise by means of his own reason into the realm of true knowledge of God. Man can know God only if God chooses to disclose himself to man. The movement concerning knowledge of God is always down—from God to man, never up—from man to God. “It is the *Deus revelatus* who is the *Deus absconditus*, the God to whom there is no way and no bridge, of whom we could not say or have to say one single word, had He not of His own initiative met us as *Deus revelatus*.”³⁷ It is

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 78.

³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 88.

³⁷*Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Part II, p. 368. The translation used in this article is that of G. T. Thompson, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 3rd Impression, 1955. Barth is still working on his *Summa*, *Die Kirchliche Dogmatik*: Vol. I: *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes* (two parts); Vol. II: *Die Lehre von Gott* (two parts); Vol. III: *Die Lehre von der Schoepfung*.

Barth's position that God has indeed disclosed himself through the Word. Men comprehend this Word as they perceive it through the working of the Spirit.

When Barth speaks of the Word of God, he seems to think of it in two ways: 1) the Word which God speaks by and to Himself in eternal hiddenness, and 2) the Word addressed to man.

As certainly as the Word of God is primarily and originally the Word which God speaks by and to Himself in eternal hiddenness—in developing the concept of revelation in connection with the doctrine of the Trinity we shall return to this great and inalienable truth—as certainly as it is, in revelation, Scripture, and preaching, the Word addressed to men. . . ³⁸

Barth's use of the term revelation is somewhat difficult to follow. He speaks of the Word being once for all revealed in Jesus as the Incarnate Word. Yet he speaks of revelation occurring to man today through the work of the Spirit.³⁹ Perhaps we may understand it that the coming of the Word is revelation. In the incarnation of the Son of God the Word comes first. After this the Word comes when the spirit of man is touched by the Holy Spirit and faith is produced. Revelation is always an event, and comes in these two ways; i.e., in the once-for-all form of incarnation; and in its ever-repeated apprehensions of individuals.⁴⁰

Barth holds that the Word is addressed to man in three forms: through the revealed Word of God, through the written Word of God, and through the proclaimed Word of God. Barth conceives of the revealed word as the Word Incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth. The written Word is the Bible. And the proclaimed Word is the word as it is proclaimed in the message of the Christian church. These three, however, are not three distinct or different words, they are rather the "One Word" in a threefold form.

We have been speaking of three forms of the Word of God, not of three several words of God. In this threefold form and not otherwise—and also as the one invariably in this threefold form alone—it is given us, and in this form we must endeavor to understand it conceptually. It is one and the same, whether we regard it as revelation, as the Bible, or as proclamation. There is no distinction of degree or value between these three forms. For so far as proclamation really rests upon recollection of the revelation attested in the Bible and is therefore the obedient repetition of the Biblical witness, it is no less the Word of God than the Bible. And so far as the Bible really attests revelation, it is no less the Word of God than revelation itself.⁴¹

³⁸*Church Dogmatics*, p. 218.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 578.

⁴⁰Cf. H. R. Mackintosh. *Types of Modern Theology*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937, p. 288.

⁴¹Barth, *op. cit.*, p. 136.

With the above thoughts in mind it is easy to see why Barth defines theology as "the scientific test to which the Christian church puts herself regarding the language about God which is peculiar to her."⁴² He maintains that theology should be a function of the church, because the church by her very existence, by her work, and through her proclamation confesses God. Theology measures the language of the church by her own source and object.⁴³ The task of theology is to measure (to criticize and revise) language about God by the standard of the principle peculiar to the church. It is to ascertain whether or not the church's language about God has the proper content. It has this proper content, Barth believes, when it has as its center Jesus Christ. "Language about God has the proper content, when it conforms to the essence of the church, i.e., to Jesus Christ."⁴⁴

Conclusion:

Having examined the programatical presuppositions of some of the leading theologians that Christendom has produced, some evaluating observations can now be made. First, we must reject completely Schleiermacher's concept of the function of theology as a descriptive and didactic setting forth of the religious affections of the Christian church. As noted, such a concept resulted from Schleiermacher's definition of religion as "feeling." Theologies that are built upon this definition tend to be philosophy or psychology of religion, rather than theology. If religion is only feeling, then all inquiry into this feeling is anthropological and is not theology at all.

Even when Schleiermacher speaks of the "whence" of the feeling of absolute dependence as being God, this in itself tends still to be anthropologic. If on the other hand the "whence" of the feeling of absolute dependence is in reality some "totally other," than man, then the important question is not what does man *feel* or *think* about the "totally other," for this would have no real value, but rather, what, if anything at all, can man *know* about the "totally other." This becomes a vital, burning question, which has real value.

Calvin, therefore, is much to be preferred when he approaches theology from the standpoint of knowledge about God. He recognizes that from its beginning Christianity claims to have such knowledge about God. It proclaims a revelation from God. To be a true Christian theologian, then, necessitates an acceptance of this claim. This acceptance must ultimately be a matter of faith—faith resulting from a confrontation with the Christian message. The statement of Augustine (*nisi credideritis non intelligetis*) does not seem so strange

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 11.

as it at first might appear. The task, therefore, of the Christian theologian should be essentially a proclamation of the Christian message.

But the question is immediately raised, what is the Christian message, and what is the source (or sources) of this message? The message has always been, and always must be that God has revealed himself in Jesus of Nazareth. The source of this message has always been (i.e., since its recording) the testimony of the New Testament Scriptures to this revelatory act of God in Jesus. A full realization of this source would act as a preventive to over-speculation in theology. It would seem that whether we like it or not we are bound by our source in a formulation of the Christian message for today. Theologians who maintain that the proclamation of the church is correct just so long as it has Jesus Christ as its center, have overlooked the matter of source.

This obviously raises the question whether the New Testament is itself revelation. Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin all agree that it is. Schleiermacher denies it. Barth takes somewhat of a *via media*, stating that the New Testament Scriptures bear witness to the revelatory act of God in Christ. This certainly is true. But it does not say enough.

Barth's concept of revelation as always an event, must be questioned. It is difficult to understand how Barth can speak of the "once-for-all-ness" of revelation in Christ and yet at the same time state that to be fully realized it must be apprehended by man, even if such apprehension is ascribed to the work of the Holy Spirit.

When Barth refers to the Scriptures as revelation, he does not use the term in the traditional sense; he means that the Scriptures aid in the revelatory event. Actually such a position is quite similar to Calvin's "witness of the Spirit." While Barth does not accept a fully Calvinistic and literal interpretation of the Genesis account of the Fall, he nonetheless maintains that the *Imago Dei* was totally effaced in man. Such an anthropological presupposition is quite fundamental to his entire theological system.⁴⁵

The New Testament Scriptures themselves must, it seems, be regarded as revelation from God. To say that they are *simply human* testimonies to the revelatory act of God in Jesus is not enough. As

⁴⁵Cf. Gustaf Wingren, *Theology In Conflict*, Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1958. Chapter two, "Antithesis: *Gott-Mensch* in Barth." This recent publication is an excellent discussion of the anthropological and hermeneutical presuppositions of three important names in contemporary theology: Anders Nygren, Karl Barth, and Rudolf Bultmann.

such their only value would be in the proximity of their witness to the event of revelation.

If it is asked, on what basis one can accept the New Testament Scriptures as revelation, no equivocation is necessary. The answer is faith. As it was seen, Augustine and Aquinas accepted the Scriptures on the authority of the church. But Calvin is correct when he observes:

It is a very false notion, therefore, that the power of judging the Scripture belongs to the Church, so as to make the certainty of it dependent on the Church's will. Wherefore, when the Church receives it, and seals it with her suffrage, she does not authenticate a thing otherwise dubious or controvertible; but, knowing it to be the truth of her God, performs a duty of piety, by treating it with immediate veneration.⁴⁶

In place of ecclesiastical authority, Calvin found refuge in the "witness of the Spirit." But the whole Calvinistic concept of the "Spirit's witness" seems to have grown out of the fallible Augustinian doctrine of Original Sin. Faith then, as it is implanted in one's heart when he beholds and considers the Scriptures, seems to be the only answer.

If the New Testament Scriptures are accepted as a revelation of God, then one final problem arises, i.e., the problem of how this revelation should be interpreted. But this is a matter of Hermeneutics and reaches beyond the scope of our present study.

When it is once granted that the New Testament Scriptures are more than human witness to the act of God in Christ, i.e., they are themselves revelation from God, then it seems that it must inevitably follow that the function of theology is to expound this revelation to the contemporary scene in the clearest possible terms.⁴⁷

⁴⁶*Institutes* I.7.2.

⁴⁷Recognition in this article should also be given for help received from an unpublished article dealing with a similar subject by Roy Bowen Ward.

The Doctrine of The Fall and Original Sin in the Second Century

Harold O. Forshey

Of fundamental importance to the study of the history of doctrines is the concept of the Fall and Original Sin. This concept, since reaching its mature development in the theology of Augustine, has stood as a massive structure casting its shadow over the vital areas of Christian thought—Sin and Grace. This study will attempt to delineate the extent to which this doctrine is present in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists of the second century.

In order to facilitate the understanding of this development we note first some of the key ideas and variations on this theological concept which has its roots in the Paradise narrative of Genesis 2 and 3 and the Pauline contrast of the "First Adam" and the "Second Adam" in Romans 5:12ff and related passages. It is not within the scope of this study to provide an interpretation of these passages, but merely to note the main currents of thought which have issued from them in order to provide a background against which to survey the materials of the second century. The purpose of such a survey is twofold: First, to note the extent, in this period, of the development of ideas which later become an essential part of the classical expression of the doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin in Augustine (and the major subsequent variations), and secondly, to see what light these materials shed on the interpretation of the passages which became the basis for the development of these concepts.

I. BASIC IDEAS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN

Pelagius

In order to gain an adequate perspective of the concept of the Fall and Original Sin, one should observe the opposite extreme in the interpretation of Paul's thought as expressed in Romans 5:12ff. Standing in total opposition to the classical expression of the doctrine of the Fall and Original Sin is the interpretation which Pelagius places on this passage. In his comments on Romans 5:12 and 5:19 Pelagius argues that all die because all sin after the *example* of the *disobedience of Adam*.¹ There is no causal connection (except that

¹Commenting on verse 12 Pelagius says: *hic autem ideo dicit omnes mortuos quia in multitudine peccatorum non excipiuntur pauci iusti . . .* On verse 19 he comments, *Sicut exemplo inobedientiae Adae peccauerunt multi, ita et Christi oboedientiae justificantur multi*. Alexander Souter (ed.), "Pelagius's Expositions of Thirteen Epistles of St. Paul: II Text and Apparatus Criticus," *Texts and Studies*, IX (1926), pp. 45, 48.

of a bad example) between Adam's sin and subsequent sin. Each man stands or falls on his own obedience or disobedience.

Augustine

On the opposite pole is the Augustinian doctrine of original sin. To note briefly some key expressions of the ideas of Augustine will serve our present purpose. Augustine argued that Adam, in transgressing the divine prohibition, depraved in his own person all who have descended from him:

As, therefore He, in whom all are made alive, besides offering Himself as an example of righteousness to those who imitate Him, gives also to those who believe on Him the hidden grace of His Spirit, which He secretly infuses even into infants; so likewise he, in whom all die, besides being an example for imitation to those who wilfully transgress the commandment of the Lord, depraved also in his own person all who come of his stock by the hidden corruption of his own carnal concupiscence.²

In Augustine's viewpoint all sinned "in Adam." All (including infants) have thus broken God's covenant.³ Mankind is, according to this view, a sinful mass which stands condemned. Recurring again and again in the heat of the controversy with the Pelagians is "the appalling definition of mankind as a '*massa peccati, massa luti, massa damnationis, massa damnata*'."⁴

Calvin

Issuing from these ideas of the Bishop of Hippo is the Calvinistic expression of Original Sin. Commenting on Romans 5:12, Calvin argues:

. . . this same, to sin, is to be corrupt and faulty. For that natural pravity which we bring out of our mother's womb, although it does not so soon show forth his fruits, yet nevertheless, it is sin before the Lord, and deserveth his vengeance: And this is that sin they call original. For as Adam, by his first creation, as well received for himself as for his posterity the gifts of God's grace; so he, falling from the Lord, corrupted, vitiated, defiled, and destroyed our nature in himself. We have all, therefore, sinned, because we are all indued with natural corruption, and so are become sinful and froward.⁵

²*De Peccatorum Meritis et Remissione*, I.10. In the edition of Marcus Dods, *The Works of Aurelius Augustine, Bishop of Hippo* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1872).

³*De Civitate Dei*, XVI.27.

⁴Ernesto Bonaiuti, "The Genesis of St. Augustine's Idea of Original Sin," *Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. X (April, 1917), p. 164.

⁵John Calvin, *Commentary Upon the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Romans* (Henry Beveridge, ed.; Edinburgh: The Calvin Translation Society, 1894), p. 135.

Roman Catholicism

A greater divergence from the Augustinian viewpoint is seen in the position of the Roman Catholic Church as represented in the decrees of the fifth session of the Council of Trent:

1. If any one does not confess that the first man, Adam, when he had transgressed the commandment of God in paradise, immediately lost his holiness and justice wherein he had been constituted; and that he incurred, through the offence of prevarication, was changed, in body and soul for the worse; let him be anathema.

2. If any one asserts, that the prevarication of Adam injured himself alone, and not his posterity; and that the wholeness and justice received of God, which he lost, he lost for himself alone, and not for us also; or that he, being defiled by the sin of disobedience, has only transferred death, and pains of the body, into the whole human race, but not sin also, which is the death of the soul; let him be anathema . . . ⁶

The difference between this and the Calvinistic adaptation of Augustinianism is basically in the matter of emphasis. Calvin insists on the depravity of "fallen" mankind whereas the Council of Trent stresses the deprivation which "fallen" mankind has suffered. Here is interjected the idea of Original Righteousness. Man originally possessed endowments (*a donum superadditum*) of righteousness and holiness which he does not now possess.

Analysis

Endless variations of the above stated concepts may be found, but these citations serve to illustrate the general structure of the theology of the Fall and Original Sin in its classical expression. Certain key elements may be noted: 1) There is the identification of all humanity with Adam;⁷ 2) There is the idea that man has inherited a corrupted nature; he is stained with the sin of Adam, a sin in which he participated; 3) There is the idea of the loss of an original endowment of righteousness or holiness; 4) There is involved in these ideas the impairment, if not complete loss, of man's freedom of will. In the light of this background we now examine the materials of the second century in an effort to determine to what extent these ideas are developed in this period.

II. THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS

The writings of the Apostolic Fathers require only brief mention for the present study. There is little doctrinal elaboration of the

⁶J. Waterworth (trans.), *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* (London: C. Dolmon, 1898), p. 22.

⁷There have been two major theories as to the nature of this identification. One is the theory that all were *really* present in Adam, the other is that Adam is the representative or "Federal Head" of the race.

ideas suggested by Genesis 2 and 3 and Romans 5:12-21 and related passages.

Epistle of Barnabas

The sole reference to the Fall is found in the *Epistle of Barnabas* which was written about 130 A.D. Barnabas relates the serpents which were sent against Israel to the initial transgression:

... The Lord caused all manner of serpents to bite them, and they died (forasmuch as the transgression was wrought in Eve through the serpent), that He might convince them that by reason of their transgression they should be delivered over to the affliction of death.⁸

There is, however, no doctrinal elaboration of this statement.

The Shepherd of Hermas

The Shepherd of Hermas which may be dated near the beginning of the second century, contains a clear statement of the Rabbinical doctrine of the *yetser*.⁹ In fact, the writer of this treatise speaks of the good inclination (*epithumia agathe*) as well as the evil inclination (*epithumia ponera*):

He saith to me; 'Remove from thyself all evil desire, and clothe thyself in the desire which is good and holy; for clothed with this desire thou shalt hate the evil desire, and shalt bridle and direct it as thou wilt. For the evil desire is wild, and only tamed with difficulty; for it is terrible, and by its wildness is very costly to men; more especially if a servant of God get entangled in it, and have no understanding, he is put to fearful costs by it. But it is costly to such men as are not clothed in the good desire, but are mixed up with this life. These men then it hands over to death.'¹⁰

This is one of the few traces of the Rabbinical doctrine which is to be found in the Christian literature of this period.

Little significance can be attached to either of these passages. Their testimony is negative in that it indicates somewhat of a vacuum in reference to Fall speculation.

⁸*Ep. of Barn.*, 12 (Translated by J. B. Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers* (J. R. Harmer, ed., Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1956), p. 135).

⁹The Rabbinical doctrine of the *yetser* represents a different viewpoint than that found in the Augustinian Fall doctrine. The cause of the transgression was the "evil inclination" (*yetser*) placed in man in the beginning. It is the *cause* rather than the *result* of the Fall. Later this idea was supplemented with the idea of the endowment of a "good inclination" as well. Cf. *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Asher 1:3-9. Babylonian Talmud, *Baba Bathra* 16a, *Sanhedrin* 43b. (English translation edited by I. Epstein. London: Soncino Press), 1935-52.

¹⁰*Mand. XII.1* (Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, p. 196).

III. THE APOLOGISTS

A second important area in the study of the second century materials is the expression of the Christian belief and practice in the various apologies given in behalf of the faith.

The Apology of Aristides

A brief passage from the *Apology of Aristides*¹¹ who styled himself a "philosopher of Athens," provides the first significant (although negative) testimony to the development of the idea of Original Sin in the early period of the church. Speaking of his Christian contemporaries, Aristides informs his hearer of something of their activities:

And if any righteous person of their number passes away from the world they rejoice and give thanks to God, and they follow his body, as if he were moving from one place to another: and when a child is born to any one of them, they praise God, and if again it chance to die in its infancy they praise God mightily, as for *one who has passed through the world without sins*.¹² (Emphasis HOF).

This passage indicates the extent of the doctrinal gulf which exists between the early part of the second century and the *massa peccati* of the Augustinian theology. To say the least, these words of Aristides bear striking testimony to the absence, at least in the segment of Christianity with which Aristides was familiar, of any concept of guilt attaching to the individual because of Adam's transgression. The passage would also seem to indicate the absence of the concept of a birth-stain in any form. This testimony is enhanced by the simplicity and the assurance with which the Apologist speaks. He does not presume to set forth a doctrinal statement. He is merely

¹¹Following J. Rendel Harris ("The Apology of Aristides on Behalf of the Christians," *Texts and Studies Contributions to Biblical and Patristic Studies*, J. Armitage Robinson, ed; [Vol. 1, No. 1], p. 6ff.) this apology is dated in the early years of the reign of Antonius Pius. This date is based on the heading which appears in the Syrian text: ". . . the apology which Aristides the philosopher made before Hadrian the King concerning the worship of God. (to the Emperor) Caesar Titus Hadrianus Antonius Augustus Pius, from Marcianus Aristides, a philosopher of Athens." (J. Rendel Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 35). Cf. "Aristides," *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (F. L. Cross, ed; London: Oxford University Press, 1957).

¹²Translated from the Syriac by J. Rendel Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 35. This reading of the passage has been confirmed by the publication of a fragment of the Original Greek (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, vol. XV, No. 1778) which contains this passage as follows: ". . . epan de teknon gennethe autois eucharistousin to tho ean de nepion ekselthe upereucharistousin hoti anamarteto apelthen. (H. J. M. Milne, "A New Fragment of the Apology of Aristides," *The Journal of Theological Studies*. Vol. XXV (1924). pp. 73, 76).

setting forth the Christian way of life. But in this instance the doctrinal presupposition shows through clearly—a child comes into the world with a *tabula rasa*.

Justin Martyr

Confirming the testimony of Aristides is Justin Martyr. From the writings of this Christian philosopher¹³ may be gleaned a rather clear picture of his views of Sin and the Fall.

Like the other Christian writers of this period, Justin affirms the free-will of the individual. Thus he says:

(God) created both angels and men free to do that which is righteous, and He appointed periods of time during which He knew it would be good for them to have the exercise of free-will; and because He likewise knew it would be good, He made general and particular judgments; each one's freedom of will, however, being guarded.¹⁴

Man is created with free will and all who will repent and wish for it may be saved.¹⁵ He acknowledges the universality of sin, however, and speaks of the whole human race as being under a curse through failure to keep the Law.¹⁶ But he does not explain this either in terms of inherited sinfulness or a propensity to evil. Rather, he states the matter in what may be called Pelagian terms: "Men were made like God, free from suffering and death, provided that they kept His commandments, and were deemed deserving of the name of His sons, and yet they, becoming like Adam and Eve, work out death for themselves."¹⁷ The same idea is also suggested in what appears to be a paraphrase of Paul's statement of Romans 5:12.

(Christ) submitted to be born and to be crucified, not because He needed such things, but because of the human race, which from Adam had fallen under the power of death and the guile of the serpent, and each one of which had committed personal transgression.¹⁸

¹³Justin's *Apology* (in two parts designated the First and Second Apologies) and his *Dialogue with Trypho* the Jew were written shortly after 150 A.D.

¹⁴*Dial. Trypho*, CII. LXXXVIII; *Apol.* I.43. The translation used for this and the following selections is the *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (American Reprint Edition; Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950).

¹⁵*Dial. Trypho*, CXL.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, XCIV.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, CXXIV.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, LXXXVIII. The section directly equivalent to Romans 5:12 is here given in the Greek: *all hyper tou genous tou ion anthropon, ho apo tou Adam hupo thanaton kai planen ten tou apheos epeptokai, para ten idian aitian hekaston auton ponereus anenou.* (J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graecae*, VI, 186).

Here he speaks of the reign of death and sin¹⁹ inaugurated by Adam's transgression. The significant part of the passage is the statement that each one "had committed personal transgression." This earliest interpretation of Paul's phrase, "for that all had sinned," is thus seen to be along the lines of Pelagian rather than Augustinian thought.

Justin draws a parallel between the virgin Mary and Eve., Eve, at the instigation of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death. Mary, on the other hand, brought forth the One by whom God destroys the serpent and also the angel and men who have *imitated* him.²⁰ In another allusion to the serpent he states that Christ will break the power of the serpent which prompted Adam's sin, and that He will deliver from the bite of the serpent (evil actions, idolatries, and other sins) all who would believe in Him.²¹

In his discussion of baptism Justin again touches on the problem of sinfulness. Baptism he maintains is for the remission of the sins formerly committed (the individual's own sins) which are due to ignorance and a bad environment.

And for this (rite) we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training in order that we may not remain the children of necessity and of ignorance, but may become the children of choice and knowledge, and may obtain in the water the remission of sins formerly committed, there is pronounced over him who chooses to be born again, and has repented of his sins, the name of God the Father and Lord of the universe. . .²²

Justin would thus seem to view the universality of sin as resulting from the predicament (a sinful environment coupled with his ignorance) into which man is born.

Justin speaks of an inherent corruption (*phthora*) in human nature, but the context clearly indicates that he is speaking of mortality.²³ He denies that the flesh is the seat of sin and maintains

¹⁹The guile of the serpent can possibly be taken as equivalent to the bite of the serpent (*Dial. Trypho*, XCIV) which he defines as evil actions, idolatries, etc.

²⁰*Dial. Trypho*, C.

²¹*Ibid.*, XCIV.

²²*Apol.*, I.61. This passage (in its preceding context) coupled with the above cited passage from Aristides bears striking testimony to the absence of infant baptism in the earliest years of the church. Justin clearly speaks of "believers baptism" and this would weigh against the idea of an inherited sinfulness.

²³A fragment cited by Leontius *Against Eutychians*, Book II.

rather that the flesh and soul together are responsible, for how shall the flesh sin without the soul going before it?²⁴

There is in the *Apology* of Justin one apparent allusion to the narrative of the "Watchers."²⁵ In this passage he speaks of the "lust of wickedness which is in every man," but he does not develop the idea nor does he relate it to the Fall. It would be gratuitous to interpret this passage in terms of an inherited sinfulness.

Justin does not glorify Adam's original state or indicate that it was substantially different from the state of any other individual when he is born.

Justin, in summary, relates the subsequent sins of mankind to the first transgression on a historical basis rather than a causal basis. The subsequent sinfulness of man is a result of Adam's bad influence rather than an inherited quality. He does not suggest, even in a vague form,²⁶ the idea of an inherited sinfulness. Man is free and is guilty on the basis of his own evil deeds.

On this point the affinity of Justin's thought and even language with that of Paul seems difficult to deny.²⁷ Thus, it may be said that Justin provides the earliest insight into the Pauline view of the Fall.

Tatian

The writings of the half-heretic Tatian follow much the same trend of thought as do the writings of Justin. In his *Address to the Greeks*, composed near the middle of the second century, Tatian stresses free will and affirms that it is the source of sin:

We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our free-will has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God; we ourselves have manifested wickedness; but we, who have manifested it, are able to reject it.²⁸

²⁴*De Resurrectione*, VIII. There is some question regarding the authenticity of this work although Eusebius (*H. E.* IV.18, in the edition translated by C. F. Cruse; London: George Bell and Sons, 1900) names it among the books of Justin.

²⁵*Apol.* I:10. The account of the "watchers" is an elaboration of the account of Genesis 6:1-4 along literal lines which interpret the "sons of God" as angels. This union of angels and women was viewed as the source of corruption in the world. In the Pseudepigraphical and Apocryphal Literature of the first and second centuries B.C. this idea received a great deal of emphasis. Gradually, however, the interest shifted to the Paradise narrative. Cf. *The Ethiopic Book of Enoch*, chapters 6-9.

²⁶Cf. N. P. Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1927), p. 175.

²⁷F. R. Tennant (*The Sources of the Doctrines of the Fall and Original Sin* [Cambridge: The University Press, 1903], p. 276), however, denies Pauline influence.

²⁸*Address to the Greeks* XI. Cf. VIII.

Our free will has gotten us into sin, but it can also deliver us from that sin.

The first transgression resulted in the removal of the Spirit which was, in the beginning, a constant companion of the soul.²⁹ The result of this separation is mortality.³⁰ Nevertheless a spark of its power is retained and the Spirit of God will take up its abode with all who live justly.³¹ Here is the first intimation (within Christian thought) of the idea of the *donum superadditum* although still in embryonic form.

Theophilus of Antioch

Theophilus of Antioch, one of the earliest commentators on the Gospels and apparently the earliest Christian Old Testament historian, like his fellow apologists retains the emphasis on free will. In the second of the three books addressed to his friend Autolycus, written in the latter part of the second century—perhaps 160-180, he affirms that man was made free with power over himself and that he drew death upon himself through disobedience. So also he who desires is able to procure everlasting life for himself.³²

Theophilus treats the narrative of Paradise in Genesis quite extensively, even to the point of citing completely the passage Genesis 2:8-3:19.³³ The glory of the Paradise situation is exalted to the extent that Paradise is removed from the earthly to a supra-mundane sphere.³⁴ A unique aspect of his thought, however, is found in his suggestion that man was created with a middle nature.

And God transferred him from the earth, out of which he had been produced, into Paradise, giving him means of advancement, in order that, maturing and becoming perfect, and being even declared a god, he might thus ascend into heaven in possession of immortality. For man had been made a middle nature, neither wholly mortal, nor altogether immortal, but capable of either; so also the place, Paradise, was made in respect of beauty intermediate between earth and heaven.³⁵

When Adam sinned he was an infant "simple and sincere," a state in which God desired that he should remain. But he wished also to make proof of him with respect to the commandment. It was

²⁹*Ibid.*, XIII.

³⁰*Ibid.*, XI.

³¹*Ibid.*, XIII.

³²*Ad. Autolycum*, II.17.

³³*Ibid.*, II.20.

³⁴*Ibid.*, II.24

³⁵*Ibid.* However, there seems to be some confusion of thought here since in II.19 he refers to the phrase "he became a living soul" and says, "Whence also by most persons the soul is called immortal."

not the fruit of the tree that had death in it, for the tree was good, but the disobedience had the death in it. Knowledge is good but Adam, on account of his infant age, was unable to receive it.³⁶

He views the first transgression as having serious consequences. In language similar to Ben Sirach³⁷ he speaks of Eve as "having been in the beginning deceived by the serpent, and become the author of sin."³⁸ A causal connection between her sin and subsequent sin is not necessarily implied. It should be noted that he goes on to say that Satan "works even to this day in those men that are possessed by him." But he does not say all are thus possessed. He elaborates further on the first sin, however, extending the transgression into the animal world. The animals, he says, were created good, but evil was brought upon them through the transgression of Adam:

And the animals were named wild beasts from their being hunted, not as if they had been made evil or venomous from the first—for nothing was made evil by God, but all things good, yea, very good,—but the sin in which man was concerned brought evil upon them. For when man transgressed, they also transgressed with him. For as, if the master of the house himself acts rightly, the domestics also of necessity conduct themselves well; but if the master sins, the servants also sin with him; so in like manner it came to pass, that in the case of man's sin, he being master, all that was subject to him sinned with him. When, therefore, man again shall have made his way back to his natural condition, and no longer does evil, those also shall be restored to their original gentleness.³⁹

Thus, Theophilus injects a new approach (exposition of the Genesis narrative) and a new idea (the first sin was a result of Adam's infant condition) into the speculation on the Fall and its consequences. Likewise he stresses the consequences of Adam's sin extending those consequences and, seemingly, the guilt to the animal creation. This relationship is expressed in terms of a "Federal Headship" and thus might be viewed as a unique anticipation of the theory that Adam's sin is imputed to his posterity on the ground that he represents the race or is the "Federal Head" of the race.

In the Apologists is thus noted a definite and unanimous emphasis on free-will. Each individual stands or falls on the decision of his own will. Men come into the world without the stain of sin. There is no indication of guilt attaching to an individual for sins that are not his own. The terminology and the concepts of the later Augustinian and subsequent Fall theology are lacking. There are, however, statements in Tatian and especially in Theophilus which may be viewed as the opening wedge for the development of the ideas of

³⁶*Ibid.*

³⁷*Eccls.* 25:34. "From a woman was the beginning of sin."

³⁸*Ad. Autolycum*, II.28.

³⁹*Ibid.*, II.27. Cf. Romans 8:18-22.

Original Righteousness and the Imputation of guilt. Basically, however, it is quite apparent that the ideas of the Fall and Original Sin are absent from the literature of this period.

IV. CONCLUSION

The emphasis that has been placed on the Fall and Original Sin in the history of doctrine from Augustine to the present might lead one to believe that these ideas have been present (in their present highly developed forms) from the very beginning of the Christian Church. This survey points out, and significantly so, that this is not the case. In the century immediately succeeding the Apostolic Period is found a theological void with reference to the Fall Doctrine in its classical expression. In fact the general tendency is along entirely different lines—the lines taken up by Pelagius—that man is a free being and responsible for his own sin. He is not stained with the Adamic sin, rather he sins after the Adamic example. The environment in which man finds himself is substantially worsened through the effect of sin, but human nature was not adversely affected as far as these writers were concerned.

The testimony of this period has a two-fold significance: 1) It points out the absence of the developed Augustinian tradition, indicating that it is not so much a direct outgrowth of New Testament exegesis as an outgrowth of gradually developing speculation (the beginnings of which are here apparent) which, it is true, has its point of departure in the Pauline statements. 2) It serves to check the tendency to read into these Pauline passages too much of the Augustinian tradition. We have been so long steeped in this tradition that we find difficulty in interpreting these passages in any other manner. This earliest testimony provides us with a basis for a different kind of interpretation (or at least a re-evaluation) of these passages.

The Case for John 7:53-8:11

Roy Bowen Ward

In an article¹ in a recent issue of the *Restoration Quarterly* Earle McMillan set forward certain textual evidence concerning the pericope adulterae. His conclusion was that the evidence is insufficient for including this pericope in the Gospel According to John.

Following this conclusion the present article will attempt to deal with the question of the history of this pericope, insofar as we are able to reconstruct that history. It will be necessary first to review the textual evidence, to analyze the pericope itself, and then to give attention to certain possible hypotheses.

A. Textual Evidence

For the purpose of this article it is necessary only to briefly summarize the significant manuscript findings. As McMillan pointed out, the major support for the pericope adulterae following John 7:52 is Codex Bezae (D), a fifth century Graeco-Latin MS., probably from the West.² On the other hand, the pericope adulterae is omitted in such important MSS. as Vaticanus (B) and Sinaiticus (aleph). (Alexandrinus (A) is defective here.) The latest pertinent manuscript discovery—the Papyrus Bodmer II (P 66)—concur in omitting the story.³ Significant also is the fact that this pericope is found following Luke 21:38 in the Ferrar Group of cursive MSS. (fam. 13).

Among the ancient writings the first which seems to refer to this story is the third century Syriac *Didascalia*, f26b,⁴ (which is also incorporated in the fourth century *Apostolic Constitutions*, ii, 24). Eusebius (d. 371) records a reference by Papias, perhaps referring to this story,⁵ but Eusebius ascribes it to the Gospel According to

¹Earle McMillan, "Textual Authority for John 7:53-8:11," *Restoration Quarterly*, vol. 3 (1959), pp. 18-22.

²Some argue for an Egyptian origin.

³For the text, see Victor Martin, ed., *Papyrus Bodmer II* (Cologny-Geneve, 1956). For an evaluation, see F. V. Filson, "A New Papyrus Manuscript of the Gospel of John," *Biblical Archaeologist*, vol. 20 (1957), pp. 54-63. A date of ca. 200 A.D. is given.

⁴Margaret Gibson, tr., *Didascalia Apostolorum in English* (London, 1903), pp. 39, 40.

⁵*Ecclesiasticae Historiae*, III, 39, 17, in edition of Eduard Schwartz, *Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* (Leipzig, 1903), II.1, p. 292.

the Hebrews (probably = the harmonized Ebionite Gospel). There is no Greek commentary on this story until Euthymius Zigabenus (ca. 1200), and he judged it an insertion.⁶ The first Latin writer known to refer to this story is Pacian of Barcelona (d. 397).⁷ In the same period three other Western Fathers, Ambrose of Milan,⁸ Jerome and Augustine, make reference to the story. Jerome, who included the passage in his Vulgate, noted that many Greek and Latin MSS. had this story in John.⁹ Augustine accused some of little faith of removing the story from their MSS.¹⁰ Later Nikon accused the Armenians of rejecting it in their version.¹¹ It should further be noted that the story is absent in Irenaeus, Cyprian, and Tertullian, although they were concerned with the subject of adultery.

B. Analysis of the Pericope

1. *The Form.* Contemporary New Testament scholarship is to a large extent influenced by the methodology of Form Criticism. Martin Dibelius, the Form Critic most accessible and well-known to English readers, in analyzing the form of this pericope, calls it a hybrid form—a paradigm which has been transformed into a Tale.¹² His main criticism is that it has not the brevity and simplicity characteristic of the paradigm. He says:

the narrative is wordy. Twice is the guilt of the woman mentioned, twice does Jesus bow down and write in the sand. . . The accusation is given at length, and even the concluding dialogue between Jesus and the woman has not the brevity of the Paradigm.¹³

Consequently, the form of the pericope is said to indicate that it is a relatively late account, at least in its present form.

However, using the methodology of Form Criticism, it is instructive to compare the pericope adulterae with the Tribute Money peri-

⁶*Comment. in Joannem., ad loc.*, in edition of J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca*, vol. 129, col. 1280.

⁷*Epistola ad sympronianum Novatianum*, iii, 20, in edition of J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 13, col. 1077.

⁸Epistle xxvi, 2, in *PL*, vol. 16, col. 1086.

⁹*Dialogus contra Pelagianos*, ii, 17, in *PL*, vol. 23, col. 579.

¹⁰*De coniugiis Adulterinis*, ii, 7, in *PL*, vol. 40, col. 471.

¹¹Johanne Cotelario, ed., *Ecclesiae Graecae Monumenta* (Paris, 1686), vol. 3, pp. 644f.

¹²In Dibelius' terminology, a Paradigm is characterized by (1) rounding off, (2) brevity and simplicity, (3) a thoroughly religious coloring, (4) a word of Jesus as the climax, and (5) an ending useful for preaching. He lists 8 pure paradigms and 10 less pure. *From Tradition to Gospel* (English translation: New York, 1935), pp. 43ff.

A Tale is a story which is complete in itself, one which has a relatively secular character, and one which demonstrates the pre-eminence of the Lord Jesus. Dibelius distinguishes 15 Tales in the Gospel. *Ibid.*, pp. 71ff.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 98. See also p. 165.

cope (Mark 12:13ff.), which Dibelius lists as a representative of the paradigm-type "in noteworthy purity."¹⁴ The series of statements in this pericope is quite similar to that in the pericope adulterae (the number and order of questions and answers). The initial question raised by the opponents is opened with the same vocative, *didaskale*. In contrast to that in the pericope adulterae, the initial question of the Tribute Money pericope is wordy: the opponents' description of Jesus is repetitive, and the question itself is repeated, *exestin dounai kenson kaisari e ou; domen e me domen*; The Tribute Money pericope notes the purpose of the opponents (12:13b), as does the pericope adulterae (8:6a). In the Tribute Money pericope Jesus gives two commands (12:15 and 12:17), and in the pericope adulterae he gives two commands (8:7 and 8:11). Furthermore, both end with a word of Jesus. Dibelius points out that Caesar's claim to the tax is not discussed;¹⁵ neither is the legality of the stoning law in this circumstance discussed in the pericope adulterae.¹⁶

Dibelius allows for an exception to his standard of "brevity and simplicity of the narrative" in the "less-pure" paradigm in Mark 10:17ff., *because* the additional details "seem to be necessary for the development of the narrative."¹⁷ The additional details in the pericope adulterae are not of the type whereby the woman is described, etc.; and it may be that the details here are more necessary than supposed.¹⁸

By this comparison of the forms of the pericope adulterae and of the paradigms of Dibelius we find that according to form the pericope adulterae can certainly be as old and as reliable as the Tribute Money pericope. Even its "secondary elements" are not without parallels.

2. *Vocabulary and Style.* The work of Henry Cadbury has shown that the vocabulary and style of the pericope adulterae are characteristic—not of John—but of Luke.¹⁹ Cadbury has pointed especially

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 43.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁶Several questions arise: stoning was not the usual punishment for an adulteress—only in certain cases; see Strack and Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, p. 519. Also, did the Jews have competence in capital punishment cases at this time? J. Jeremias argues that they did not, "Zur Geschichtlichkeit des Verhoers Jesu vor dem Hohen Rat," *Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. 43 (1950/1951), pp. 145-150.

¹⁷Dibelius, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁸Here, however, this argument depends on the text. Dibelius is correct in seeing explanations, etc., in the variants—which do reflect embellishments.

¹⁹Henry Cadbury, "A Possible Case of Lukan Authorship, *Harvard Theological Review*, vol. 10 (1917), pp. 238-241.

to certain "unquestioned words" that are characteristic of Luke: *apo tou nun, archomai apo, epimeno, eipen de, hos*.²⁰ He concludes, "It can safely be affirmed that the passage in its oldest form contained as much distinctively Lukan language as the average passage of equal brevity and simplicity in Luke's acknowledged works."²¹

3. Significant Terminology.

8:6—*kato kupsas toi daktuloi kategraphen ten gen* (also 8:8). Certain manuscript variants seem to be attempts to explain the action of Jesus writing on the ground. At the end of 8:6 codices E G H and K add *me prospoioumenos*, perhaps meaning: "paying no attention to them." Codex U adds to 8:8 *henos hekastou auton tas hamartias*, explaining what Jesus wrote.

Wetstein has collected a number of Greek parallels, but they reflect various moods—from mere pastime to uncertainty.²²

Humbert,²³ Margoliouth,²⁴ Power,²⁵ and Wensinck²⁶ have supplied Arabic parallels to Jesus' action. Wensinck, in particular, suggests that this is the gesture of one reflecting upon a serious question. Bishop, using the contributions of Wensinck, goes further to say that this action of Jesus—and, indeed, the whole picture presented in the pericope—points to "an eastern, if not a Palestinian background."²⁷ If this is so, the reliability of the pericope adulterae is enhanced.

But yet another significance may be attached to Jesus' action, as Manson suggests in a note to an article by Jeremias. The thesis of Jeremias is that the Sanhedrin did not have competence in capital-punishment cases in the time of Jesus. Over against the traditional view that the Jews were taking the woman to judgment, Jeremias asserts that they are coming back *from* the Roman judgment. Thus the question put to Jesus involves him in the dilemma of choosing between Roman or Jewish authority. As Jeremias says,

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 242.

²¹*Idem.*

²²Joannis Wetstein, *Novum Testamentum* (Amstelaedami, 1751), *ad loc.*

²³Paul Humbert, "Jesus Writing on the Ground (John viii. 6-8)," *Expository Times*, vol. 30 (1918/1919), pp. 475, 476.

²⁴D. S. Margoliouth, "Jesus Writing on the Ground," *Expository Times*, vol. 31 (1919/1920), p. 38.

²⁵E. Power, "Writing on the Ground," *Biblica*, vol. 2 (1921), pp. 54-57.

²⁶A. J. Wensinck, "John VIII. 6, 8," *Amicitiae Carolla* (London, 1933), pp. 300-302.

²⁷E. F. F. Bishop, "Pericope Adulterae," *Journal of Theological Studies*, vol. 35 (1934), p. 44.

if Jesus says that one shall put through the sentence, then he appears as a Revolutionist; if he says that it shall not be executed, he makes himself unpopular. It is thus the same cunningly devised political 'temptation' as in Mark 12:13-17. Whichever way Jesus may decide, he lays himself bare.²⁸

To this interpretation of Jeremias Manson adds an explanation of Jesus' writing in the dust which he bases on the "well-known practice in Roman criminal law, whereby the presiding judge first wrote down the sentence and then read it aloud from the written record."²⁹ Manson then interprets the pericope thus:

Jesus by this action says in effect: 'You are inviting me to usurp the functions of the Roman Governor. Very well, I will do so; and I will do it in the approved Roman manner.' He then stoops down and pretends to write down the sentence, after which he reads it out: 'Whoever among you is without sin, let him be the first to cast a stone at her.' . . . Jesus defeats the plotters by going through the form of pronouncing sentence in the best Roman style, but wording it so that it cannot be executed.³⁰

The explanation of Manson (following Jeremias) curiously enough leads us again to the Tribute Money pericope in Mark. In both instances we have to do with a situation where Jesus is tested in the context of Roman/Jewish tensions. And in both instances we have a picture of Jesus answering his opponents in a cogent way—first using a Roman coin and then a Roman legal procedure. In Mark they were amazed; in the pericope adulterae they filed out.³¹ If the Jeremias-Manson explanation is accepted, then the pericope adulterae shows an insight into the conflict produced because the Sanhedrin did not have competence in capital-punishment cases. In early second century material this point is forgotten; witness the Gospel of Peter in which it is the Jews, not the Romans, who actually put Jesus to death!

8:11—*oude ego se katakrino* (also 8:10). Is the idea of forgiveness involved in the pericope adulterae? No, say many commentators, such as Lightfoot³² and Hoskyns.³³ Of course, *aphiemi* is not

²⁸Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 148.

²⁹T. W. Manson, The Pericope de Adultera (Joh 7 53-8 11)," *Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol.44 (1952/1953), p. 256. Manson documents this statement with several sources, including Th. Mommsen, *Le Droit penal romain* (Trans. Duquesne, 1907) II, pp. 129-131.

³⁰*Idem.*

³¹Perhaps substantiating this interpretation is the fact that *kata-grapho*, used only here in the NT, may mean to register or to record. Moulton and Milligan state that in their sources it is used "in a more or less technical sense." *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament*, s. v.

³²R. H. Lightfoot, *St. John's Gospel* (Oxford, 1956), p. 348.

³³Edwin Hoskyns, *The Fourth Gospel* (London, 1956), p. 570. But Hoskyns is not altogether consistent. In John 5:14 where Jesus says *meketi hamartane* Hoskyns does find "forgiveness"; *ad loc.*

used—but is it not implied? In Greek legal usage *katakrino* is used for the sentence of condemnation, but when in judgment the accused is released, then *aphiemi* is often used as the corresponding term.³⁴ Cremer says that in profane Greek *aphiemi* is used:

to express the discharge or acquittal of an accused; because, either with or without the judicial sentence, the charge falls to the ground, or the punishment is remitted, and the guilty person is dealt with as if he were innocent.³⁵

Here Jesus deals with the guilty adulteress as if she were innocent (there is no doubt of her guilt!). In this legal context Jesus' decision is expressed, *oude ego se katakrino*—but this is merely the negative way of saying, *aphiemi se*. And if Jesus dealt with her as if she were innocent, is this not in this case *aphienai tas hamartias*?³⁶

It is objected that this is not forgiveness of sins because there is no indication of repentant faith on the part of the woman.³⁷ However, there are occasions of forgiveness in which the inner condition of the one forgiven is *not* discussed, such as in Mark 2:5. The pericope adulterae would seem to fall into this category: the accent is not on repentance, but is rather on Jesus' action (which is, in effect, forgiveness). This is the understanding that the earliest witness to this pericope had, for the author of the *Didascalia* prefaced his citation with an exhortation to the bishops to act as Jesus did.³⁸

4. *The Point of the Pericope.* The situation of the pericope adulterae is one of controversy, as in the Tribute Money pericope. In both instances Jesus' opponents try to put him in a situation where he will have to side either with the pro-Roman forces or the pro-Jewish forces; but in each case Jesus overcomes the dilemma. But in the pericope adulterae the dilemma itself is connected with the subject of sin: The woman is sinful, and if Jesus does not condemn her, he sins against the Law of Moses. Jesus turns the situation around, and following the Roman procedure, he says that the sinless ones must execute sentence. The Jewish leaders are hereby convicted of sin and the true sinless one, rather than condemning, for-

³⁴Note the usage by Plutarch in *Moralia*, I. 178F and 178D.

³⁵Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, p. 296

³⁶Bultmann has pointed out the frequent usage of *aphesis*, etc., in the juridical sense, and he has emphasized that this is not yet in the religious sense. *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 1, s. v. But the point here is that in *this* situation the legal aspect must have religious elements too. Jesus does not act as a purely legal judge (Luke 12:14). If his role is primarily a religious one, and if *aphienai* is implied, then it is *aphienai tas hamartias*.

³⁷Hoskyns, etc.

³⁸Gibson, tr., *loc. cit.* It should be noted, however, that the author of the *Didascalia* did not perfectly understand the story since he assumes that it speaks also about repentance!

gives the woman and says, go, sin no more. The contrast is between the sinners (who attempt to, but cannot condemn) and the sinless one (who can condemn, but does not)!

C. The Source of the Pericope

The general consensus of New Testament scholarship is that the source of the pericope adulterae is not the Evangelist John.³⁹ Then what is the source?

Some have considered that it is a later tradition. H. Koester has suggested that the pericope adulterae comes not from the life of Jesus, but,

Rather it has its Life Situation in the Church-debate over the forgiveness of adultery, and it authorizes a positive answer to this question through a narrative projected into the life of Jesus.⁴⁰

The Church-debate over the forgiveness of "sins unto death," including adultery, had its beginning in the NT (Heb. 10:26, etc.) and continued for several centuries. The second century was a period of variety—even in the same region—in regard to the penitential system.⁴¹ In the early third century a significant event occurred. Callistus, bishop of Rome (d. 222), issued an edict—called "peremptory" by Tertullian—in which he announced: "I remit to such as have done penance the sins of both adultery and fornication."⁴² This incident could not have been the actual source of the pericope adulterae.⁴³ But the second century could have produced this tradition, and when Callistus and others argued for a more "laxist" position, it was then incorporated into some canonical texts.

There are certain objections which must be made against this hypothesis that the pericope adulterae is a second century tradition. (1) The form of the pericope does not necessarily indicate a late tradition.⁴⁴ (2) The vocabulary and style have been shown to be Lukan, and therefore these are no indication of a late date.⁴⁵ (3) Jesus' action of writing on the ground has been shown to suggest an early and reliable account, not an uninformed late tradition.⁴⁶

³⁹Note the opinions of those cited by McMillan, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁰Helmut Koester, "Die ausserkanonischen Herrenworte," *Zeitschrift fuer die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, vol. 48 (1957), p. 233.

⁴¹B. J. Kidd, *A History of the Church to A.D. 461* (Oxford, 1922), vol. 1, p. 371.

⁴²*De pudicitia* 1, in *PL*, vol. 2, cols. 680-683.

⁴³Too many things argue against such a late source, such as the fact that too soon thereafter it is referred to in the *Didascalia* as an incident in the life of Jesus.

⁴⁴See *supra*, pp. 3-5.

⁴⁵See *supra*, p. 5.

⁴⁶See *supra*, pp. 5-7.

(4) If our analysis of the point of the pericope is correct, then the emphasis is on the contrast between the sinners and the sinless one (who forgives). This does not seem to be directly to the point in the debate on forgiveness of "sins unto death." If the story were written with this in mind, there would be no apparent point to Jesus' statement, *ho anamartetos ktl*. The laxists never argued on the basis that the rigorists could not condemn because they themselves were sinners. Rather the argument had to do with authority. Tertullian argued against Callistus that he couldn't forgive the sin of adultery because God did not delegate his authority to the Church to forgive "sins unto death."⁴⁷

A second hypothesis is put forward by F. Schilling, who has amassed evidence to show that the pericope adulterae depicts Jesus as a judge superior to Daniel in the Susanna story.⁴⁸ He sees an author other than the Evangelist John, but one who wrote and inserted the section "with full knowledge of the general character of the Johannine Gospel."⁴⁹ Schilling speaks of the "authentic quality" of the story, but the Life Situation of the pericope as such is in the early church at a period later than the Fourth Gospel. It functions as "a procedural precedent for the presbyters of the Church. They should always offer forgiveness, and treat accordingly, the straying and lost, all, not only the penitent."⁵⁰

Against this hypothesis there are also certain objections. (1) Schilling's suggestion that the author of the pericope consciously wrote the story with the intent to fit it into the Fourth Gospel does not account for the Lukan character of the pericope (he recognizes the difference of style, but not that it is Lukan⁵¹). (2) He does not adequately deal with the appearance of the pericope in Luke in the Ferrar MSS. (3) Furthermore, for all his arguments for an intended contrast with Daniel, the contrast fails to come through clearly. Such connections of this pericope with the Susanna story, as in the Roman Missal,⁵² may reflect a reading back into the pericope a connection with Daniel, rather than an intended analogy by its author. (4) Finally, it would seem that the point of the pericope is not directed primarily to presbyters, as Schilling suggests. The pericope reflects interest in Jesus himself, the sinless one (who forgives). It is a preaching function that is involved, not an ecclesiastical function. The ecclesiastical function, as found in the *Didascalia*, is a secondary and later function.

⁴⁷Kidd, *op. cit.*, p. 375.

⁴⁸R. H. Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 1, pp. 642ff.

⁴⁹Frederick Schilling, "The Story of Jesus and the Adulteress," *Anglican Theological Review*, vol. 37 (1955), p. 96.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 96.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 105.

E. Bishop has suggested that the pericope adulterae was originally a part of one of the sources of Luke. Bishop's hypothesis rests upon V. Taylor's reconstruction of "Proto-Luke." (Taylor's hypothesis is as follows: Luke gathered oral material from eye-witnesses, etc., while in Caesarea, and he himself recorded it. The material included especially stories about women. Later Luke used this source (Luke 1:2) in composing Luke-Acts.) Bishop also draws upon Cadbury's declaration of the Lukan vocabulary and style, the possibility of a Caesarean manuscript tradition (i.e., the Ferrar Group), Wensinck's interpretation of Jesus' action as an Eastern custom, and his own examination of the text of Luke and of this pericope. "The gap," Bishop concludes, "in the beautiful collection of stories about Jesus, which Luke gathered during his days in Caesarea and Jerusalem, is filled in."⁵³ This hypothesis would push back the Life Situation of the pericope to either the early Palestinian church, or to the ministry of Jesus itself. Taylor dates "Proto-Luke" at A.D. 60-65,⁵⁴ and he evaluates it as "an early and reliable historical work."⁵⁵

That the pericope is Lukan is strongly suggested by the available evidence: vocabulary and style, subject matter,⁵⁶ its position in Luke in the Ferrar Group of manuscripts, etc. But if it is Lukan, how and why was this substantial passage removed en bloc from the text of Luke?⁵⁷ Although it is dangerous to speculate too much behind the existing Gospels, Bishop's hypothesis does offer a solution to the problem. Bishop explains the Lukan character by affirming that Luke did write the story, but that he wrote it as a part of what Taylor has called "Proto-Luke," a collection of such stories, especially stories about women. But then Luke did not use all of this source when he composed Luke-Acts. Thus the story was not actually removed from a canonical gospel (as Augustine and Nicon suggested!), because it did not stand in one at the beginning. In Caesarea, where "Proto-Luke" would have been known, the story

⁵³Bishop, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

⁵⁴Vincent Taylor, *Behind the Third Gospel* (Oxford, 1926), p. 213.

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, p. 254.

⁵⁶Note Luke's interest in women, his interest in sinners, and the corresponding emphasis on the forgiveness by Jesus. Cf. Henry Cadbury, *The Making of Luke-Acts* (New York, 1927), pp. 258, 265. Although "judgment" is a Johannine theme, the kind of "judgment" here is somewhat different from what is characteristic of the Fourth Gospel—it is more Lukan than Johannine. Cf. D. F. Buechsel, "Krino, ktl.," *Theologisches Woerterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 3, s.v.; esp. see p. 939.

⁵⁷Cadbury is convinced that passages were not removed en bloc from texts, and yet he contends that this pericope is Lukan. *HTR*, *loc. cit.*

could have found its way into MSS. of Luke in its "approximate" place.⁵⁸

Certainly, whether "Proto-Luke" existed or not, there is much evidence that points to Caesarea as the earliest place where the story was known. Indeed, if the pericope adulterae is Lukan, note that the MSS. which correctly assign it to Luke is the Ferrar Group, a family of texts which seem to represent a Caesarean text tradition, as Streeter has shown!⁵⁹ And Eusebius, who seems to know this story,⁶⁰ was a Caesarean. Eusebius says that the story was contained in the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, and two of our important witnesses to this lost gospel—Eusebius and Origen—lived in Caesarea at least part of their lives; and Jerome says that this gospel was in the library in Caesarea!⁶¹ That the story was known in and around Caesarea seems assured. That the story went back to a "Proto-Luke" is a distinct possibility.⁶²

As the story became more well-known outside of Caesarea, it may have then found its way into the Fourth Gospel, perhaps as a gloss on the subject of "judgment" in John 8:15f, or perhaps through a lectionary. Possibly it found its way into the Fourth Gospel because it became associated with the Apostle John in Papias and/or the *Gospel According to the Hebrews*, as Bacon suggests.⁶³ The debate on forgiveness no doubt determined how much it could be used and to what extent it could find and maintain textual security in the manuscript tradition.⁶⁴

⁵⁸Bishop shows a slight error of placing in these mss.

⁵⁹B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels: A Study of Origins* (London, 1924), pp. 79ff.

⁶⁰Of course, Eusebius' reference is brief, and therefore it could be questioned whether this was precisely the pericope adulterae or not.

⁶¹*Dialogus contra Pelagianos*, iii, 2, in *PL*, vol. 23, cols. 597f.

⁶²Actually, the story would go back to the oral tradition, but the particular form of the written story must go back to some kind of Lukan influence.

⁶³Benjamin Bacon, *Studies in Matthew* (New York, 1930), appended note VI, pp. 486ff.

⁶⁴Other recent articles on the pericope adulterae not previously cited include: S. Laeuchli, "Eine Alte Spur von Joh. 8, 1-11," *Theologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 6/2 (1950), p. 151. Harald Riesenfeld, "Perikopen de adultera i den fornkyrkliga traditionen," *Svensk Exegetisk Arsbok*, vol. 17 (1952), pp. 106-118. (A German summary of this Swedish article is given by Muenderlein in *Internationale Zeitschriftensschau fuer Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete*, vol. 2 (1953/1954), p. 81.) J. Blinzler, "Die Strafe fuer Ehebruch in Bibel und Halacha; zur Auslegung von Joh. viii.5," *New Testament Studies*, vol. 4 (1957), pp. 32-47.

Reflections on Reading Easton's Commentary on the Epistle of James in the *Interpreter's Bible*

J. W. Roberts

Sir William Ramsay, the great English historian and archæologist, once referred to the writings of certain English scholars who had assumed that most of the documents composing the New Testament were written in the middle of the second century as "the least valuable productions of the human intellect" (*The Education of Christ*, p. 125).

These scholars began with a basic assumption that no superhuman or divine nature could appear on earth in human form. When they were faced with the fact that the Gospel sources boldly affirm such a divine-human appearance in the incarnation of Jesus of Nazareth they were faced with the alternatives: either to suppose that Jesus was mistaken in his claim, or to suppose that he *never made the claim*. The latter alternative they chose to adopt. They adopted the idea that the conception of the incarnation was a delusion of the church of the second century which arose in popular fancy and which gave rise to most of the New Testament books. These documents in this view then attest—not the facts of first century beliefs, but those of the second.

These English scholars (according to Ramsay) were not original in their findings. They rather worshipped (so to speak) at the shrine of the German Empiricists. Ramsay admired the German scholars of the generation preceding his own. He recognized them as original thinkers who took no rule as law and sought truth for themselves regardless of source. Their English devotees were "too busy studying the work of (not necessarily the best but) the latest German who had printed or lectured on the N. T." to do any research on their own. They assumed that opinions so widely held and so ably defended must be true. But they did not reckon with the false premises, on the unlimited possibility of error, the extent to which a "thoroughly logical scholar, working in his study, can go wrong when he starts from false premises."

Ramsay points out that these scholars became obsessed with the idea of "late dating of N. T. books." But they did not suspect the genuineness of the documents on account of indications which they had detected in them. Rather, they first formed the belief that the books must be incorrect and unhistorical, and they then set to work to find in them the required indications of lateness which they had assumed for them.

Typical of this type of authorship which devoured everything the foreign scholars wrote and chose always the worst (in his opinion) was James Moffatt's *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*. Modern students who still use this book should by all means read Ramsay's review of it entitled *The First Christian Century*. Seldom has one man laid bare the presuppositions of one with whom he disagreed as Ramsay did in this case.

What the great Paulinist objected to most was that this theory made obscure and even unknown figures of the second century the real authors, not only of the most powerful documents in the history of the world (the majority of the books of the N. T.), but also of the Christian religion itself! Where else he was wont to ask has a group of unknown and unknowable figures had such influence? In the workings of this theory Peter, Paul, John, James the beloved, Jude, Luke, Mark, and Matthew practically disappeared and in their stead shadowy personalities like "the elder John" (born really of a critical misinterpretation of Eusebius of Caesarea) and indefinite "Paulinists" or "Petrinists" of the second century became the real authors of the N. T. In this reconstruction of Christian origins obscure statements of relatively unknown persons like Papias and the Alogoi became of more weight than the definite historical testimonies of men like Justin, Polycarp, Irenaeus, and Clement. The result was the dissecting and the chopping up of the sources due to the "loss of all literary and historical insight."

Surely the time for such a methodology should have passed. But not so.

Such is the work of Burton Scott Easton in his commentary on the epistle of James in the *Interpreter's Bible* (Vol. 12, Abingdon, New York, 1957).

For those not acquainted with the *Interpreter's Bible* it should be said that it is a recent commentary of a scholarly quality done on a rather pretentious scope. Mechanically the volumes represent a model of workmanship. The lineup of authors represents outstanding scholars in many schools and fields of thought, combining a curious mixture of old line liberalism and neo-orthodoxy. Of course, in so large a work one would not expect uniformity of viewpoint or of competence in the results. The set contains many worthwhile things in spite of the presuppositions of most of its authors.

Burton Scott Easton is an Anglican scholar. He was a long-time professor at the General Theological Seminary in New York. He published widely both articles and books. He is best known perhaps for his commentaries on Luke (1926) and the Pastorals (1947) and for his translation and commentary (1934) on the *Apostolic Tradition* of Hippolytus, the Christian apologist..

Easton is best known to this writer through his commentary on the Pastoral Epistles. It has been used in teaching a college class on the books of 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus. It follows the liberal line that the Pastorals are non-genuine, second century product of a late disciple of Paul who wrote them to combat the gnosticism of Marcion. It is, in this writer's opinion, the "horrible example" of what a commentary on the Pastorals ought not to be.

Easton's commentary on James also denies the genuineness of that book. The stock arguments against the traditional ascription of the epistle to James the Beloved are given: 1. It represents too good Greek for such a Jewish writer, 2. It has too little reminiscence to have been written by a brother of Jesus in the flesh, 3. It was late being accepted into the canon, and 4. The author shows a familiarity with a Greek literary style (i.e., the Greek diatribe) too technical to be the product of an Aramaic Jew. The author at the same time admits that the writer has given us a book which is Jewish to the core.

This reviewer would be the last to deny that these points present a problem. But we do not think that they are of sufficient weight to induce one to reject the genuineness of the books *on their own weight*. They admit of plausible explanation. For example, it is known that Galilee was Grecian in its background. In a career of leadership of thirty-five years James certainly could have put himself in a position to appeal to the Jewish converts of the Hellenistic world. Finally, he could have employed an amanuensis to help in the composition of the book. To take another example, the late acceptance of the book into the canon does not inveigh against it, for we know that at the very time when the church was making its decision on the acceptance of the book of James and others like it whose genuineness was questioned it was going through a soul-searching process of distinguishing between the apostolic and the spurious in its literature. To suppose that a book of recent production and hence of obvious anonymous authorship should have found acceptance at such a time seems improbable.

These grounds have been covered so many times before that they are almost trite. But if one thinks that this deters modern authors from a continued use of them, he is mistaken. However, as Ramsay said of the authors of whom he spoke, some are masters as "composing verbal variations on the outworn theories of former ages." Easton's variation which tends to give his work a distinction is in his adaptation of the novel suggestion of Arnold Meyer who had reworked the suggestions of earlier scholars (L. Massebieau and F. Spitta) that James was not originally a Christian letter at all, but wholly Jewish into which distinctive references to Christ had been interpolated by a late Christian. Meyer's novel suggestion is that

the Jewish document which he thinks constituted the "original" was modeled on the speech of Jacob characterizing the twelve tribes of Israel in Genesis 49. Of course, the names "Jacob" and "James" are the same in Greek. Some ingenuity is required to see such a plan in the epistle (which does not even mention one of the tribe of Israel by name) but all that is necessary is to find some reference in either the Old Covenant, Philo, *et cetera* using some expression like "joy," or "patience" or "prayer" to describe some of the tribes or the Patriarchs and behold the point is proved! Easton after a cautious hesitation in his approval of the method in the introduction (p. 11) proceeds in the commentary to isolate the portions belonging to the different tribes.

His finished product is thus hardly a commentary at all in the sense that one would expect a sympathetic treatment of one attempting to explain the place and value of a document on which his historic faith rests. It is really more of a defense of his thesis that James did not write the epistle and that it is really a Jewish and not a Christian work.

In view of what this writer considers as a thoroughly outdated methodology as he characterizes the commentary he cannot help thinking of Ramsay's description of the works written with the same presuppositions in his day as "the least valuable productions of the human intellect."

Book Reviews

Philippians through the Revelation, Expanded Translation of the Greek New Testament, Volume III. Kenneth S. Wuest. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1959. 284 pp. \$3.50.

With this volume Dr. Wuest concludes his expanded translation of the Greek New Testament, a work which should be of considerable value to Bible students, particularly to those seeking clarification of the Authorized Version. The author has fulfilled well his purpose of creating an English translation which will bring out the richness, force and clarity of the Greek text and be in keeping with the spirit of the times in which the original text was written. A preface to the translation of each of the books calls attention to certain passages which have been newly interpreted and explains the line of reasoning which led to the translation chosen. Dr. Wuest has done a service to the reader not only on replacing obsolete English words, expanding certain Greek words into a sentence translation, and distinguishing between seeming synonyms, but also in paying close attention to the rules of Greek grammar which influence the meaning of the text. He is very accurate, for example, in his translation of verb tenses and moods, of the interrogative particles, of conditional sentences, and of passages where the absence or presence of the definite article is significant. Occasionally his strict adherence to the principle of exact rendering of tenses in English seems to create an awkwardness of expression, as in "be remembering" for the simple "remember" or "all things be constantly doing" for "do all things." Although attention to the Greek word order is obviously important, his excessive devotion to the retention of this order in English too often obscures rather than clarifies the meaning. Even to preserve the force of all the Greek words it hardly seems helpful in Philippians 3:8 to translate "Yes, indeed, therefore, at least, even I am still setting all things down to be a loss" in place of "Indeed I count everything as loss." The reader may well question also the interpretation of Colossians 2:12 which Dr. Wuest feels called upon to use in order to avoid the acknowledgement of baptism as immersion, a logical symbol of burial. On the other hand, Phil. 2:6, 3:12; I Thess. 1:4; II Tim. 4:7; James 2:14; I Peter 1:1; II Peter 1:20; and I John 3:9 are only a few of the passages clarified by the more accurate translation here provided. For any reader unfamiliar with the Greek language but genuinely interested in ascertaining the true meaning of the original text, this work should be of great assistance.

Hester J. Gruber